

CROSSROADS

The Newsletter of the African American Lesbian Gay Alliance

Vol. 1, No. 1

April 1987

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The Aids epidemic touches home. Be informed, get involved.

Editor: J. Anthony Clark

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The first evening of film will be Sunday, April 26, beginning at 7:00 p.m. Admission will be free (donations are always accepted). Popcorn and refreshments will be available. It will be an enjoyable evening, so bring yourself, or a date, but definitely an open mind. For further information about location and films, call 237-1494.

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Art Reception/Cocktails..... Coming in May

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Every year or so, the National Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays (NCBLG) has a conference to celebrate the spirit and vitality of our community. NCBLG's most recent national conference was held in St. Louis in November, 1985. A total of 130 black lesbians and gays came from all over the country to help kindle a new sense of pride and solidarity. The three-day conference wiped away any doubts that ours is a creative and diverse community.

During the conference, workshops were organized to discuss such issues as building an autonomous black lesbian/gay press, prison outreach, the link between the struggles of blacks in America and international movements for self-determination, and AIDS in the black community, to name a few. There was also a concerted effort to recognize the historical significance of black gays and lesbians in America.

The guest of honor at the conference, and the first recipient of the NCBLG Lifetime Achievement Award, was 83-year-old black lesbian, Mable Hampton. Hampton worked as a dancer and performer in New York during the 20's, 30's and 40's, and, in her own words, "had a ball" during the Harlem Renaissance. She is currently involved with the Lesbian Herstory Education Foundation and has walked in every New York Gay Pride parade. Ms. Hampton provided a vivid physical and emotional proof that gays and lesbians have been around forever, even though heterosexual society refuses to acknowledge our contributions.

As a tribute to our vitality in the arts, two evenings of entertainment were served up to conference participants. The entertainment was impressive! We sang (Gwen Avery and Blackberri performed); we danced (George Bellinger, choreographer); we read short stories and poems (thanks to "Blackheart," a black gay men's writing group, and amazing lesbian authors such as Pat Parker, Jewelle Gomez, and Cheryl Clark); and we did some very evocative "performance art/poetry" (Essex Hemphill, Wayson Jones, Assotto Saint, Britez Alderson, Willie Barnes). The wonderful diversity and high quality of the performances reinforced the feeling that we have much to take pride in.

For further information about NCBLG, including membership info, write to: NCBLG, 930 "F" St., N.W., Suite 514, Washington, D.C. 20004.



*The African American
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*Membership Drive
Starts Now!!
Call 299-3050 or
Write to P.O. Box
50503 Atlanta, Ga.
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THE NEWS OF THE AFRICAN AMERICAN LESBIAN/GAY ALLIANCE

VOLUME 1, NO. 6

NOVEMBER, 1987

A THRILL ON THE HILL: Singing for the March on Washington

Carolyn J. Mobley

About six years ago, a group of 15 to 20 women got together in Atlanta to form a musical group just because they enjoyed singing and enjoyed spending time with other women. I was one of them. We named ourselves: THE ATLANTA FEMINIST WOMEN'S CHORUS. Like any new group in town, we hoped that we would attract a few more women to our numbers and we wanted to keep singing each year, bringing the Atlanta community music from women's culture and experience. Who could have guessed back then that in 1987 we would be one of the guest groups performing at a rally for the National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights? We have come a long way baby. Today there are more than 70 women in the chorus -- 54 of us went to Washington. In the beginning we had only one accompanist, our director, Linda Vaughn (who is still our director), but today we have an assistant director, three pianists who regularly accompany us and three extra musicians (drummer, bass player, and lead guitarist) who perform with us for major concerts.

What was it like for us in D.C.? It was like nothing any of us had ever experienced before. Sunday, October 11, the day of the march, the very air in D.C. was charged with excitement and joy. The mood was festive and expectant
(continued on page 6)

REFLECTIONS ON THE MARCH

RON

For the past couple of years now, I have spent much of my time wondering what had happened to the struggle for Gay and Lesbian rights. Where were the great warriors? Where were the battles now being fought? Was the movement dead? As I made plans for the trip to D.C., I remembered thinking that the March would probably be a good indicator of the current status of the movement. There was discomfort in this observation, however, because if only ten to twenty thousand people turned up for the March, instead of the couple of hundred thousand that were expected, then surely the movement had at least gone into hiatus.

We arrived the Thursday before the March and spent the first two days being tourists --doing all of the things that traditional tourists do. It was evident that as each hour passed the face of the city looked increasingly gay. We happened upon this bar after about two hours of frantically searching for it. It was called the Bachelor's Mill. I only make mention of this because of the warm welcome we received --the manager, Bebe, gave us drinks on the house when she found out we were there for the March, and because of a rather stirring debate we had with one of the locals on why we chose to march. (Both points will serve as my themes for later articles.) Anyway, the bar was the Tea!!!

(continued on page 2)

(Reflections, continued)

By Saturday there were so many gay folk in the city, I happened to overhear two women in an interesting conversation, "Honey where did all these sissys come from?" "Oh, child I heard that they have a big convention going on." I smiled as they gawked at my "Out and Outrageous" button as I passed them.

I chose not to attend the wedding, opting instead to go to the National Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays' meeting. NCBLG held a sharing prior to their meeting that Saturday afternoon. It was food to my soul to see the brothers and sisters from around the country, most of whom I had not seen since the St. Louis convention, come together to address concerns and efforts that were germane to our part of the community. Plans were announced for NCBLG's 10th Anniversary Convention which is set for the fall of 1988, and which promises to be delightful. We also learned of a Philadelphia group's plans for a male retreat around the Thanksgiving holidays. More than anything we heard the importance of networking with our brothers and sisters around the country, and most of all the need to support NCBLG, to become members and join in the struggle for justice and equality.

Remember my fears about the death of the movement? On Sunday, the day of the March, my fears were laid to rest. The movement was there in all of its splendor! I brought my video camera to capture some of the excitement, but several times I had to put it down to wipe away the tears for I was overwhelmed by the beauty of it all. Over 500,000 (yes 500,000, despite the inaccuracies of the media) persons said yes --the movement was indeed alive and still strong.

As the March began, I climbed upon a dumpster to get a better shot with my camera, it was a favorite spot for several others who had the same idea. That was fine until the People of Color banner came by and a great tidal wave

swept me from the sidelines above the crowd into the sea of marchers below. I couldn't resist the spirit, I had to march! Forget the video, I wanted to be there with my brothers and sisters. I had to march.

It is interesting to note that two of the speakers who recieved the warmest welcome were a black man and woman, Jessie Jackson and Whoopi Goldberg.

I wanted to see the quilt from the NAMES project, but decided not to since I was already emotionally drained.

I also found quite interesting an article about the March that appeared in a gay weekly the week after the March that said "...there weren't as many blacks as expected." As who expected? Surely, there were many more than I expected. When one considers that blacks make up less than a fifth of the general population, and given the political and economic injustices we suffer, I think that blacks made a good showing. Could it be that they were expecting Hosea, and his followers?

ODDS AND ENDS

-----There is a magazine called **"BGM/Black Gay Male"** published in D.C. by The Blacklight Press. Three issues have come out so far. If you are interested in subscribing, or getting copies of back issues, contact: The Blacklight Press, P.O. Box 9391, Washington, D.C. 20005.

-----**Gay Cable Network** is producing a videotape of the March on Washington. If you would like to order a copy of the tape, send \$39.95 to Gay Cable Network, 32 Union Square East, Suite 1217, New York, NY 10003, or call (212) 477-4220.

-----A **National Black Gay and Lesbian Conference** is being planned for Los Angeles, February 12-14, 1988. For information, contact National Black Gay & Lesbian Conference, P.O. Box 29812, Los Angeles, CA 90046, or call (213) 664- 4716.

(Odds, continued)

-----If you are interested in joining the **National Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays**, send a \$20 membership fee to NCBLG, P.O. Box 2490, Washington, D.C. 20013, or call (202) 265-7117. If you would like a subscription to their magazine, *Black/Out*, please add \$10. Include your name, address, city, state, zip, phone number, and date.

-----There is also a black gay men's publication called "**Other Countries**." Published by Other Countries Press, subscriptions are available by writing to Other Countries, P.O. Box 3142 Church Street Station, New York, NY 10008.

-----Sage Sohler is a documentary photographer doing a project on **gay and lesbian couples** in informal home situations. The project will result in an exhibition in an art gallery or museum or in a book. If interested in being photographed, contact Sage at (617) 277-3530.

-----If you have any articles, poems, events that you would like to appear in **Crossroads**, send your submissions to AALGA, P.O. Box 50503, Atlanta, GA 30301.

WE NEED EACH OTHER Ricky Wilson

It was midnight when my friends and I got on interstate 85, heading north, going to Washington, D.C., for the gay rights march. It was ironic that we were going to the symbolic North to "fight" for freedom instead of going north toward freedom. As we made our way to D.C., I reflected on three experiences that I had in telling people about my going to the march. The first two experiences involved gay men, both of whom responded negatively, initially.

The other one involved my talking to my mother. In spite of any reservations I had, these experiences crystallized for me the importance of my going to the march. Also, being there gave me a chance to reaffirm my convictions on how I saw the thrust of the gay

struggle.

When I told one of my roommates that I was going to Washington to the gay rights march, he looked at me incredulously, took a self-righteous stance, and sneered, "Nothing but a bunch of queens making a lot of noise." I was taken aback at how his voice dripped with so much contempt. I reared my head back and fixed my mouth to respond, but I was still startled. I threw a barrage of things at him, anything to make him realize how he should not loathe those of us who had decided that it was important to show our strength in numbers. When I finally gathered my thoughts and when the raging storm inside subsided, I tried to say something to him that would hit home. My roommate was the victim of a callous gay-bashing that has left him disabled. He has made a remarkable recovery. I asked him to think about his unfortunate accident and to think about what if his perpetrators had been caught. He interjected that he would take them to court. I asked him if he really thought that the person or persons would be convicted once it was established that he was coming out of a gay club, in other words, that he was a queer. He looked at me blankly with his cigarette dangling from his hand. We took a long stare at each other, and the look on his face told me that, although the words were unspoken, he had come to the only non-delusional answer to come to in this homophobic and homosexual hating world. Later, he apologized and we exchanged hugs.

My next experience involved the roommate of a friend. When I told him that I was going to Washington for the gay rights march, he started to laugh hysterically. When he asked me again, I told him, and he laughed uncontrollably once more. As I stood there watching him jerk his body around, I got the urge to hit him. After he calmed down, we started to talk about the march and AALGA. He told me that he had no need for these types of

(continued on page 4)

(We Need, continued)

activities or organizations, which is his right, but deep down, I knew we shared the commonality of growing up gay in this society, which far too often translates itself into self-hatred, self-denial, and self-effacement. So, at the risk of being impertinent, I started to hurl things at him to chip away at what I perceived to be his smugness. He was unyielding. Then, I decided to talk to him about something that affects all of us one way or the other--- sex. I told him that one reason to march was to protest the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in the Bowers vs. Hardwick case, which upheld sodomy laws in the state of Georgia and which gave the law authorities the right to enter your home legally and arrest you for having consensual sex with someone of the same gender. My friend's roommate became chillingly silent as he contemplated the police state implications of what I had just told him. (Before I left, I hugged him because I didn't know what else to do.)

My third experience occurred when I called my parents to get my sister's phone number and address; she had just recently moved to the D.C. area. My mother told me that she didn't have her number or address and asked me why I was going to D.C. My first impulse was to obfuscate the truth. I started to equivocate, but I decided to tell her. (Why not? She already knows that I'm gay.) I said, "I'm going to a conference and a march." "What kind of march," she asked. "A gay rights march," I replied. "WWWHHAAATTTT!!!" she vociferously intoned. "Mom, I'm not telling you anything that you don't know already." "That's true, but do you think that you will accomplish anything by marching," she asked. "I don't know if the march will accomplish anything or not, but I do know that not doing anything won't accomplish anything either. Besides, remember the civil rights movement." "That's right. Well, I have to go now," she said. After I hung up the phone, I wondered if I should not have lied. (Although my parents

know that I'm gay, we hardly discuss it, unless I bring up the subject. I'm finding out that this response is the typical one for most parents who have at least accepted the fact that they have a homosexual child.) The next day, my mother called to talk about my getting car insurance. After we finished discussing that, she brought up the march again by asking me if I had really thought through the whole situation. I ended up telling her that, even though she knew that I was gay, it had not been easy for her to deal with, and I thanked her for being supportive of me even if she didn't understand. I also told her that I could not pretend what my sexual orientation meant in this society. In a voice laden with resignation, she wished me a safe trip. I really wanted to holler at her that her attitude was just exactly the type I was going to march against. However, on second thought, I realized that this woman was the same one who recently worried about my safety when my car broke down in a small Southern town. She was concerned that her Black son would be swinging from some tree. She was only concerned about my welfare when she questioned me about the march. However, for me, to remain silent at this point in my life is tantamount to my acquiescing with this system that does everything possible to make people like me go away.

Thinking about these three incidents gave flesh and bone to a nebulous feeling that I should be at the march. I understood the self-loathing and fear that my roommate and my friend's roommate expressed. The only thing I had to do was to take a look at the ongoing process that I'm still going through in coming to terms with myself. I understood the concern (fear) that my mother had for my safety. However, I have grown to understand that self-acceptance and self-love are the foundation of empowering one's self and that living in fear of people knowing what your sexual preference is is no guarantee that you won't be attacked, harassed, or even killed.

(continued, page 5)

(We Need, continued from page 4)

Also, in talking with my friend's roommate, I reminded myself about how much of an affront to personal freedom the Supreme Court's ruling in the Bowers vs. Hardwick case was, and I think all Americans should be made aware of it and the ramification of giving law authorities and their fellow citizens so much power.

Going to the march not only helped to give me a better focus but also helped to reaffirm my belief that the major battle in the gay struggle is shoring up our own ranks. When I try to distill the march into its essence, I come to the conclusion that the march was for us, gay and lesbian people, and I hope that the message we carried back with us was that we need each other. No matter where we are, we need to come together as often as possible, see each other, touch each other, say to each other that we are fine just the way we are, and let our brothers and sisters who are hurting or afraid know that they are not alone. Based on my experiences dealing with racism, as a group, I think that, although the expenditure of energy in addressing the straight community is a necessary evil, simply because we do not live by our gayness alone, it should not be a priority.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**** SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15.....11:00am**, Morning worship at the First Existentialist Church, 470 Candler Park Drive, will be led by Sabrina Sojourner, AALGA board member. Her talk is entitled "Leaving the Past Behind is an Ever-Present and Forward Motion."

**** SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15.....8:00pm**, First public reading of a new play by Sabrina Sojourner, "Finding My Way Home." The play deals with issues surrounding childhood sexual abuse. The reading will take place at the Atomic Cafe, 1655 McLendon (corner of McLendon and Clifton, near Little Five Points).

**** SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 22.....7:30Ppm**, AALGA Film Festival continues. "Roll Thunder, Hear My Cry," will be shown. Georgia Hill Community Center.

**** FRIDAY, NOV 27 - 29.....**Black Gay Men's retreat, Pottstown, Pennsylvania. The theme of the retreat is "Self Esteem - Loving Ourselves Through the 80's and Beyond." The retreat is being put on by a group called AODDI Philadelphia. Contact Michael Oatis, (215) 748-5562. Cost: \$85.

**** WEDNESDAY, NOV 25 - 29.....**BWMT Atlanta 6th Anniversary and Southeast Regional Meeting. Various events are scheduled. Call 794-0264 for info.

**** WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2.....**Concert by Michael Johnson, new organist at Morehouse.

**** FRIDAY, DECEMBER 4.....**Atlanta Feminist Women's Chorus Concert, 8:00pm, GSU. Recital Hall.

**** FRIDAY, DEC 4,5,6.....**Morehouse-Spelman Christmas Carol Concert, Sisters Chapel, Spelman College.

**** SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6.....**AALGA Monthly Meeting, 4:00pm. Call 525-3376 for location and information.

(Thrill, continued from page 1)

as we gathered at the Ellipse and waded through the many groups forming while we looked for each other. We could see and hear other performing groups warming up and practicing their twirls. The marching bands were especially colorful and a joy to watch. Later we all found each other, gathered for last minute instructions, and did some warming up of our own.

At long last, it was time to take our place in the huge procession. We marched toward the rally site where the stage was already set up with gigantic speakers at the front and more speakers a couple of blocks down what seemed like an endless grassy field. This area was soon filled with people sitting so close together that one could hardly walk through to go to the porta-potty or a nearby vendor for a drink.

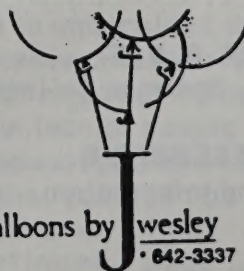
Once at the rally site we were ushered off to a large roped-off section behind the stage and given a little yellow dot to stick onto our clothes, which identified us as performers and authorized us to be in this roped-off area, where we were asked to stay until time for us to go on stage for our eight minute performance. This is where our nerves and patience really got tested, for it was here in this restricted area where we waited, and waited and waited for more than three hours. What were we to do with ourselves for three whole hours? Well, we lined up and practiced our songs, especially our last song which had a few motions that we needed to work on a little more. We also wandered around in the tent backstage, tasting the munchies that were provided for us, and huddled together to keep warm as the temperature dropped that afternoon.

During our three hour plus waiting period there were some other people also waiting their turn on stage. Among them were performing groups as large as ours -- the New York Gay Men's Chorus; a wonderful group of female percussionists called Sister Boom-Boom;

and some more famous individual performing artists like Whoopi Goldberg and Holly Near. One of the women in our group not only got to take a picture of Whoopi Goldberg up close but also got to have her picture taken with Whoopi. Wow! She was so down to earth --so real, so warm and sincere. So were Holly Near and Chris Williamson, Kate Clinton, and the little woman who was in the movie "Poltergeist," all of whom greeted us graciously that windy afternoon in Washington, D.C.

Finally it was time --our turn on stage-- the crowd before us was awesome. Marna Ripley-Hager, a soprano from our group gave a beautiful and moving introduction of us as singers and of the songs we were there to sing: "We Shall Go Forth" by Margie Adams, "Biko" by Bernice Johnson Reagan, and "Love Is the Answer" by Todd Rundgren. The crowd had been sitting as long as we had been waiting, and it felt as if they had been waiting just for us. They applauded wildly and at the end they raised their hands, swayed to the music, and some even sang with us the refrain of our last song "Love Is the Answer." The response of this crowd really warmed and thrilled our hearts and left us feeling that somehow all of us there had met on a soul level, touching and agreeing on the truth of our message.

Much too quickly our eight minutes were over and we were filing off stage. By this time most of the members of the women's chorus had only 2 hours before their flight back to Atlanta was to leave Washington. I was scheduled for a flight out of Washington on Monday morning. Whether we left D.C. on Sunday, Monday, or later in the week, we all left on a high with memories that will stay with us forever.



John W. Southall
OWNER

SHADOWS OF A FLEETING LOVE

Once more we meet,
my love;
Who is not
my love;
Who can never be
my love,
Or can you be
My Love?

How long must we court,
my love?
And let the miles between us
come between us,
Or engage in idle chatter of
Why, we are not
Why, I am not
WHY you are not
My Love!

Can you imagine the passion,
As we lay cheek to cheek, our bodies
swaying...
to a rhythmic beat
(much like when I first saw you dance)
My Love!

Can you deny the ecstasy we'd share,
As the beauty of our swollen manhoods,
unable to resist the burning
heat,
explode suddenly...and as the sweet juices flow
we become
One.
My Love.

Until that time,
when such silent dreams give way to the beckoning of
Reality;
I shall hold you...
close,
and know...
you will always be-
My Love.

ron

SOUNDS FROM WASHINGTON C. Cummings

As an overcast afternoon became a chilly autumn evening, 500,000 people began to scatter from the huge mall that stretches between the Capitol Building and the Washington Monument. The speeches had ended, signs were discarded, banners rolled up for storage until next summer's pride marches. The 1987 March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights was history.

(continued on page 8)

(continued from page 7)

My friend and I headed for the Archives Metro station. Metro, with its rail lines reaching far out into the Maryland and Virginia suburbs, is the daddy longlegs transit system MARTA dreams of becoming. As we rode the escalator down into the bowels of the underground station, I closed my eyes and began to think of the day's events. Images of thousands of homosexuals marching on Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House came to mind. I remembered the awe I felt upon seeing how numerous we were as we traced what seemed to be an infinite line toward the Capitol. But just as vivid to me as the sights of the march were its sounds. I recalled the emotional power of the march, the joy, the anger, the resolve, the humor, by closing my eyes and listening to the voices in my memory.

The happy sounds of friends reunited after separations of distance or time sent waves of joy rippling through downtown D.C. Remembering the cheers and words of encouragement from the spectators along the march route sent me soaring again. But I also remembered the anger of the crowd as we passed a counter-demonstrator who tried in vain to make us hear his misdirected words. Pointing our fingers toward him, we shouted "shame, shame, shame..." over and over, louder and louder. Someone started the chant "2-4-6-8, we don't need your Christian hate!" Somehow, this anger evolved not into the self-destructive hate shown by the counter-demonstrator, but into resolve. "What do we want? - GAY RIGHTS; When do we want 'em? -NOW!" Perhaps, as some have said, we as gay people will indeed teach the world new ways to live; perhaps the march was itself a symbol of our ability to transform anger into constructive action.

My friend and I reached the platform of the Metro station and waited for the train to arrive. Standing there among

other marchers also trying to get home, I began to chuckle. Echoing in my head were some of the more humorous sounds from the march. As we had passed the Old Executive Office Building and had begun to turn the corner to head toward the White House, someone started chanting "2-4-6-8, Reagan thinks his son is straight!" It became a very popular cheer, to say the least. As we were walking by the Treasury Building, the crowd started yelling "\$3 bills, \$3 bills," (with Harvey Milk's face on the front, of course). I really started to laugh, however, when I remembered a song sung by a group of about 8 young guys:

"I don't go out with girls anymore;
I will never marry.

I only go out with boys I adore:
WOOPS, I'm a fairy!"

Lights in the subway platform begin to glow and pulsate when a train approaches a Metro station. As a train neared the station, I heard what was perhaps the most memorable sound of the march, a sound that echoed an event 24 years earlier. Spontaneously, in the Archives Metro station, on Pennsylvania Avenue, at about 7pm, someone started singing "We Shall Overcome," the rally cry of the 1963 Civil Rights march. The sound bounced off the curved stone walls of the station, surrounding and engulfing everyone. More and more people joined in the song, "....straight and gay together...." Perhaps the song is overused, perhaps it doesn't pack the same punch it once did. But at least for me, shockwaves rippled through downtown D.C., underground.

Please help AALGA meet the cost of producing and distributing this newsletter, as well as build a treasury so that we may continue to hold potluck dinners, the film festival, and other social and community activities. Membership fees and donations may be mailed to P.O. Box 50503, Atlanta 30302.

AALGA NEWS

Newsletter of the African-American Lesbian/Gay Alliance of Houston

P.O. BOX 130818 Houston, TX 77219 Phone/Fax: (713) 864-2242 EMAIL: AALGA@aol.com

Volume 1 Issue 8

October, 1995

AALGA Announces First Ever Women's Educational Forum

Alicia Davis

AALGA announces its first annual Women's Educational Forum, which will feature three (3) informative presentations. This educational first effort is AALGA's response to the many requests for an event which is geared specifically toward women. Although AALGA is a cogendered organization, it recognizes the need for such a forum to take place, and supports it in every regard.

Incidentally, this event is special since women of all races are coming together for a common cause. Even as there are issues and problems which are unique to African-American women, we acknowledge the common thread which connects us all. To this end, we will come together and be further educated about those complex issues which affect women.

The evening will begin with a "get acquainted period" during which the attendees are free to meet and greet the presenters as well as the other persons in the room. This period will offer the time to make both new and old acquaintances with the other persons at the forum. "So as the song says...we'll make new friends, but keep the old."

Opening the forum will be a refreshing look at spirituality as it relates to our community. The Rev. Carolyn Mobley will address this issue. Presently she is the pastor of the Metropolitan Community Church of the Resurrection (MCCR). A community activist, she is also a member of AALGA, and on the board of directors of Sisters.

Health concerns for the lesbian community will be discussed by Pat Gandy, presently the president of the Lesbian Health Initiative (LHI). Ms. Gandy is active with man community organizations, and is very excited about speaking at the forum.

Julie La Rue will wrap up the speaking segment with an in-depth look at financial concerns for the gay and lesbian community. Ms. LaRue is a member of the executive and Professional Association of Houston (EPAH), and suggests that everyone have a sound financial plan. Her advice is for both men and women to seek out a financial advisor who can assist you personally.

Finally, AALGA encourages the participation and attendance of both male and female members. Feel free to bring along anyone interested in attending the forum. The evening promises to provide a wealth of information. Also, there will be food and drink for everyone. We are asking a donation of \$5 which will go solely to cover the expenses occurred in setting up the forum. For more information, please contact the AALGA infoline at (713) 864-2242, ext#2.

AALGA Events Planner

For information on these or other events, please call the AALGA info line (713) 864-2242

Date	Time	Event/Location
10-11-95	11:30-1pm	National Coming Out Day UH Rally
10-11-95	7:00pm	HOPE Project Meeting
10-11-95	7-9:00pm	LGRL Community Forum Metro Multi Service Center
10-12-95	7-9:00pm	LGRL State of the State Movement Montrose Library
10-14-95	7:00 pm	HGLPC Annual Dinner
10-15-95	10am-3pm	NBGLLF Educational Forums Whitman-Walker Clinic (DC)
10-16-95	11am-3pm	Million Man March (DC)
10-20-95	7:00pm	HOPE Project HIV Prevention Workshop
10-21-95	Midnight-3am	KPFT 90.1 After Hours
10-22-95	4:30-8pm	AALGA Women's Educational Forum (6 Greenway Plaza)
10-24-95	7:00pm	Social Committee Meeting
10-25-95	7:00pm	Fundraising Committee Meets
10-26-95	7:00pm	Youth Committee Meeting
10-27-95	7:00pm	AALGA-PAC Meeting
10-28-95	9pm-1am	Halloween Party
10-29-95	5:30pm	AALGA General Meeting
10-30-95		Deadline for Newsletter articles
11-2-95	7:00pm	Newsletter mailout party
11-5-95	5:00pm	AALGA Board Meeting
11-19-95	5:30pm	AALGA General Meeting

From The Chair...

Steve Walker

I hope this newsletter reaches everyone in good spirits. There are a few things I need to mention. First, I need to clear up any confusion that people may have regarding the AALGA Logo. During the August meeting, we voted on a logo by signatures. I apparently incorrectly read one of these signatures as one person voting twice. In light of this, I then called for there to be a tie-breaking vote of the top two vote getters. I now realize that I made a mistake in ordering the vote, and Alicia Davis was correct in pointing out my mistake. We will, however, continue to honor the vote that took place in August.

Next, we need to make sure that we respect everyone's right to express their opinions. We do not all have to agree. In fact, it will be rare that everyone agrees with everything. However, we must respect and honor ~~the~~ all the differing opinions that make us unique.

There will also be another change on the current board. To assure that there is a more defined leadership, as well as furthering our existence as a cogender organization, the position of Vice-Chair will be created. This position will require a bylaw change, which will be presented at the next general meeting. I have proposed that the positions Vice-Chair and Chair be persons of opposite genders.

All AALGA committees will be meeting during the week of October 23, 1995 to plan all activities for the remainder of the year. The meetings will take place at 7pm, at my home. Each committee member will be receiving a separate letter notifying them of the exact day of the meeting. Currently, the committees scheduled to meet are the Social Committee (Oct 23), the Fundraising Committee (Oct 24), the Youth Committee (Oct 25), and the Political Action Committee (Oct 26). *If you are* interested in attending either of these committee meetings, please contact the AALGA info line.

The HOPE Project Moves Ahead

David Lee

The activities surrounding the establishment of the HOPE Project continue. We are in the process of getting the by-laws together, along with

AALGA NEWS

the corporate papers. Then we'll start to establish our non-profit status 501 (c) 3 status.

There are fundraising car washes planned for Oct 7th and 21st from 4 to 7pm at 3407 Montrose Blvd in the parking lot of the Atlas Travel Bldg. An HIV Prevention Workshop is scheduled for October 13th at 7pm at Stephen Browns home. The workshop will be open to anyone, and gives important information on safer practices. For directions, please call Stephen at 523-5449. ✓

The next HOPE meeting is at Renaldo Dash's home at 7pm, October 11th. For directions, please contact Renaldo at 783-9725.

Several pamphlets are the process of being put together. We plan several condom distributions once our pamphlets are printed. Additionally, a telephone information line will be established by the end of the month, and we will be seeking volunteers to operate the line. Meeting will be scheduled to train persons interested in working on the phone lines.

I remind everyone that the HOPE Project is here for us, and we must be the first to support it. We are continuing to take pledges or donations to assure the HOPE Project gets off to a sound start. If anyone has questions about HOPE, please contact me at 741-2450/*David Lee*

AALGA-PAC Report

LuJack Tyler

On Saturday, September 30, 1995, the Texas Human Rights Campaign Fund (THRF) held a community leadership conference. The goal of the conference was to build a coalition of cooperation between the African-American and the gay and lesbian communities. Representatives from AALGA, the Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus (HGLPC), AIDS Foundation Houston and the HIV Prevention Center were present. We were, however, disappointed that of all the leaders of the African-American groups, only Jew Don Boney showed. Nevertheless, the conference was very informative, and was instrumental in building dialog and a spirit of cooperation.

October will be a very busy month for AALGA-PAC. There will be Coming Out day activities at UH on October 11, 1995, and at Rice on October 13, 1995. On October 12, 1995, the Lesbian and Gay Rights Lobby (LGRL) will have a "State of the States' Movement" conference discussing where we stand on many issues in the state.

12:00AM 3 * Midnight-3Am

I would also like to invite everyone to listen to my radio show, After Hours, on KPFT 90.1 FM on Saturday, October 21, 1995, at. My cohost Jim Carper and I will have several guests and discussion topics. Steve Walker of AALGA will discuss racism and sexism in the gay and lesbian community. Dale Carpenter and Tirey Counts of Log Cabin will discuss Republican presidential issues. HGLPC President Terry Richardson will discuss activities of the Discrimination Free Zone (DFZ) project, and Rev Jew Don Boney will discuss his relationship with the gay and lesbian community. This promises to be an exciting show, so I hope that you will be listening.

AALGA News Issue of the Month: Should We Arm Ourselves? A Point-Counterpoint Argument

Point: Stephen Brown

Violence against Gays and Lesbians has been steadily increasing while little has been done to address the problem. While many are attempting to get hate crimes legislation and ordinances passed, the radicals are attempting to further restrict our existence. Maybe we should consider a different option. One such being the newly passed concealed handgun law that allows citizens to carry a concealed weapon with the proper training and education.

The issue of handgun possession is a very controversial topic. There are strong feelings on both sides of the issue. Many people feel that there is already too much violence in the world and more guns won't solve the problem. While this may be true, in our society, it is also true that there are individuals who derive perverse pleasure from assaulting and sometimes killing gays and lesbians.

All men and women should have the right to go about freely without the fear of being assaulted, though at times it appears we do not. We all have the right to protect ourselves from bodily harm. The passage of the concealed weapon law gives those who desire, the option to carry a concealed weapon for their protection.

Many will recite the statistics and numbers of incidents of accidental deaths with handguns and go

AALGA NEWS

on to mention that some gun owners are even shot with their own gun.

Also, theft of guns from the owner allows guns to get into the hands of criminals who in turn use them while committing crimes. While these are legitimate concerns, they are not the fault of the gun, but the gun owner. Comprehensive education and training programs on the proper use, storage and cleaning methods should prepare most responsible adults to be licensed gun owner.

Our community should be encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity to alert hate mongers and violent homophobics that we will no longer be passive and wait to become their next victim or allow assaults and murders to continue. Our message should be to "gaybashers" that they now run the risk of losing their life if they choose to assault the wrong person.

Although time makes us tend to forget, it was not all that long ago when a group of young men and teenagers came from the Woodlands and attacked and killed banker, Paul Broussard. He was beaten to death with a board that had spikes and nails. I truly believe the outcome would have been different had he been carrying a gun. When faced with the prospect of their own deaths, many would be attackers reconsider their heinous acts.

Counterpoint: Ken Harris

Yes there is a problem of increasing violence against lesbians and gays. However, bearing arms is not the answer to our troubles.

If we allow neurotic and sometimes psychotic people to conceal handguns, we open up Pandora's Box. We are members of a larger community; African-Americans by and large are victims of racist attitudes and stereotypes that already threatens our existence.

We will no doubt be the victims of more violence motivated solely by the color of our skin. The mere thought of racist homosexuals patrolling Montrose is a far more threatening to me than the thought than gay-bashing.

We also must remember alcohol and guns don't mix. When under the influence of alcohol, people are less likely to react rationally. A simple argument can hence end in an unnecessary death. Violence begets more violence, and henceforth it is not the answer.

AALGA News issue of the month is an editorial article. The opinion expressed is solely that of the author, and does not necessarily represent that of AALGA.

Something To Think about

John Humphries

In Houston, over 50% of the people living with AIDS are minorities. Yet, out of a total of \$10 million awarded to the Harris County Health Department, less than 10% targeted for minorities. This just doesn't add up!

We cannot allow such a blatant imbalance of funds to continue. I ask that everyone contact our County Judge, Robert Eckels and express your displeasure. We need to let him know that the current administrator for Federal AIDS Funds is not properly dispersing them.

Eckels can be reached at the below address and phone. Thanks in advance for letting the county know your feelings.

County Judge Robert Eckels
1001 Preston, Suite 911
Houston, TX 77002

Socially Speaking

Ken Harris

I would like thank everyone who helped to make the September social the success it was. This month, AALGA is planning a Halloween party, scheduled for Saturday, October 28, 1995 from 9pm til 1am. We will be asking for a \$5 donation from persons attending the event.

AALGA will provide food and non-alcoholic refreshments. For those of you who want alcohol, please bring your own liquor. We will need help with decorating, cleaning, and hospitality.

There will be first and second place awards given to the two best costumes (judges are not eligible to win). The exact location for the party has not been determined at press time. We will, however contact everyone by phone during the week of October 16, 1995 with more details.

Please RSVP at the AALGA infoiine by Monday October 23, 1995 so that we will prepare enough munchies.

POETRY

Love Morphis

Once a Lover.. You've become a stranger that has come to share my Living space..can you introduce yourself?

I remember nights when being with you would set me free.
Like a patch-work comforter, you were multicolored with
the Love that you gave, and just as warm..

You provided me with security and now you've turned
into a worn-out old rag, that isn't worthy of drying the
tears that I cried when I realized: "I first lost you!"

Renaldo Dash

Women of Colour!

Who are you, woman of Colour?

You're that breed; that maybelline has no shade for...

You're that instrument of joy which is often abused and misunderstood.

You're multifaceted, in every anatomical way.

You are Charcoal... dark as a mother's womb.

You are Cinnamon...warm as fire's ember.

You are Mocha... and sweet as mango.

Why then, Women of Colour are you so toned down by the **World?**

Renaldo Dash

The African American Lesbian Gay Alliance
(AALGA) of Houston
Invites you to join us in sisterhood
for our first annual
Women's Educational Forum

Rev. Carolyn Mobley
Pastor, Metropolitan Community Church
of the Resurrection (MCCR)
Pat Gandy
President, Lesbian Health Initiative
Julie LaRue
(LUTCF) Acacia Group

October 22nd, 1995
9 Greenway Plaza
Suite 3000
The Acacia Group's
Design Room

There will be a
"get-acquainted" period
from 4:30pm to 4:59pm
Presentations will begin
at 5:00pm and end at 7:00 pm
Dinner will be served
promptly at 7:00pm
Asking \$5.00 donation (not mandatory)

Please RSVP (if possible) by Oct. 15th
at 864-2242

Thank you for your cooperation
Alicia Davis
Director, Women's Relations (AALGA)

FINANCIAL BLESSINGS FOR THE TERMINALLY ILL

Members of our society who are terminally ill still have the right to enjoy life's simple pleasures. There are many positive, joyful things one can do to make their lives happier and more peaceful while they endure their illness. There is an extreme need to create awareness of the many "Financial Blessings" available to them. These blessings come as legal services, personal record keeping and accounting, mortgage reversal, food banks, estate information and

- * Viatical settlements...just to name a few.

- * Vi-at-cal, a. [Latin viaticus, pertaining to a way or road, from Via, a way.] relating to provisions, money or supplies while on the road or during a journey. ie. in other words (money right now for you from your own life insurance policy, Work or personal.)

Learn how you can help make things easier in an extreme time and need.. "Your financial blessings are rightfully yours... they belong to you"

YOU ARE INVITED TO COME AND HEAR MORE

At the next meeting on October 29, 1995

Presenter: Bobbie A. Brooks, MSW *Life Today*

CALL (713) 785-5635 or 1-800-467-2518

FOR MORE INFORMATION or an APPLICATION

All calls are strictly confidential

** Paid Advertisement*

CROSSROADS

THE NEWS OF THE AFRICAN AMERICAN LESBIAN/GAY ALLIANCE

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 1

JANUARY, 1988

Dear Members and Friends of AALGA:

We are writing to let you know of some changes happening within our organization. At the January 23rd General Meeting (January 10th was postponed due to weather), a new board was elected. Our new board consists of Carolyn J. Mobley (1), Ricky Wilson, John S., Chuck Cummings (1), Sabrina Sojourner (1), Carla R., and Ron Wilkins (1). Congratulations to the new board and many thanks to the outgoing board.

The next General Meeting will be Sunday, February 7, 4pm, at the Quaker House, 13 Fairview (at Oakdale), near Candler Park. The board will present their recommendations for Co-chairs, and discuss with the membership their desires and dreams for AALGA.

Time for a Change?

It has been suggested that our meeting times be switched from Sunday to a Thursday, Friday or Monday night. If you've been unable to attend because of the day and/or time and one of the suggested evenings or days would be better for you, please contact a board member and let them know.

Newsy Letter/ Newsletter

This "Newsy Letter" is being brought to you by the Newsletter staff. Beginning with the February 7th meeting, the day of our General Meeting will also serve as the deadline for the Newsletter. In making this change, we hope to get information and events to you on a more timely basis.

Additionally, there have been some suggested changes in the composition of the editorial staff. If you are interested in working on the newsletter please contact Sabrina Sojourner, 622-9900, Chuck Cummings, 378-9493, or Anthony C.

One of the items we hope to present to the board and membership is suggested editorial guidelines. If you have some ideas about what you would like to see included in the guidelines, again call Sabrina, Chuck or Anthony.

Announcements

Southeastern Conference of Lesbians and Gay Men, April 14-17. Planning committee meets every other Monday at the Atlanta Fulton Public Library, Downtown Branch, at 7pm in the meeting room. Next meetings are February 1, 15, and 29. The two committees currently needing the most help are the Workshop and Alternative Housing committees.

On Sunday, January 31, at the Atlanta Waterworks on Howell Mill Rd., there will be

a spaghetti dinner from 5-8 pm; tickets are \$5.00. Call 584-2104 for more information. Proceeds benefit SAME (Southeastern Arts Media and Education Project). Our own Duncan Teague will be performing that evening.

That's all for this edition of our "Newsy Letter." See you at the General Meeting, February 7.

Sabrina Sojourner
Anthony C.
Chuck Cummings

Coming up in the next edition of Crossroads:

More on the Southeastern Conference of Lesbians and Gay Men
NCBLG and SAME ask for our support
Memorial to James Baldwin
Debate on Homosexuality in the Black Community

EDITORIAL POLICIES

The editorial staff reserves the right to withhold publication of any article, fiction-piece or poem which it deems inappropriate for its membership and/or its readers. This includes blatantly and subtly racist, sexist, or homophobic or otherwise bigoted material. The exception being an article on bigotry which uses such material to make its point.

**SEND ANY QUESTIONS, COMMENTS,
POEMS, ARTICLES TO:**

**AALGA
P.O. BOX 50503
ATLANTA, GA 30302**

CROSSROADS

THE NEWS OF THE AFRICAN AMERICAN LESBIAN/GAY ALLIANCE

VOLUME 2, NO. 8

November 1988

AALGA Represented at NCBLG Conference

by John S.

Fred W., Ron W., and John S. attended the 10th Anniversary Conference of the National Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays. The conference was held at the Howard Inn in Washington, D.C. from September 30 to October 2, 1988. The theme was "Homework for Homeboys and Homegirls".

Gilberto "Gil" Gerald, NCBLG's immediate past president and the current secretary, came to Atlanta just over two years ago to form an affiliate chapter here in Atlanta. From this initiative, AALGA was conceived. AALGA was born and continues to live independent of affiliation. However, NCBLG is the governing organization of 6 lesbian and gay organizations which are located in various US cities.

The conference highlights were as follows:

- *State of NCBLG address : Joan Duncan
- *Benefit : Co-sponsored by NCBLG and Black Women Together.
- *Keynote Address : Rev. Carl Bean
- *Awards Banquet Reception, "NCBLG; the First Decade : Audio Visual
- *Caucuses : Bisexuals, Men, Transpersons, and Women

The Workshop Topics:

"All Together Against Aids", "Tell It Like It Is", "The Nitty-Gritty of Political Action", "Nurturing Our Families In Every Direction", "Bringing a Chapter to Life", "Can We Talk?", "Spiritual (Common) Sense".

Attendance is estimated at 100 persons which, according to an attendee, is a significant drop from the St. Louis Conference held over two years ago. Never the less, the

(continued on page 2)

Letting Our Hearts Lead the Way

by Sabrina Sojourner

I just realized why it has been difficult for me to write about being part of the Names Project Quilt experience in Washington, D.C. As with any experience, I have a plethora of feelings which tumble in opposition to each other.

I am so grateful to have been there: On the Ellipse a massive expanse of green stretching from the front of the White House to the back lawn of the Washington Monument. I felt immersed in compassion, beauty and love. I walked on a beach splashed with color - lemon yellow, royal blue, fire engine red, winter white, forest green, mourning black and every shade of lavender... a name draws me to it. My heart threatens to pound through my chest as tears spill over the dams. My gut clenches as my hand moves to touch the saffron colored patch. The contact dissolves any last doubt (hope) that it "couldn't be" one of my few male friends from childhood I truly cared about. "Nooo!!" escapes from me as I slam my fist against the ground. And in a moment arms I do not know enfold me; and I let the wave of grief wash over me and through me. The voice is soothing. The arms reassuring as they rock me quiet. Magically, Kleenex appears along with hands, arms and faces of comfort. I am on my feet thanking the man who held me. Another man gingerly moves towards me. I see the question on his face. Touching his hands, "I know" all I need to know. "I went to high school and junior high with him," I volunteer. Tears fill his eyes as he moves in to hug me. "We were lovers for 11 wonderful years" he whispers.

The viewing of the Quilt is as full of stories as the Quilt. I know that my experience was

(continued on page 2)

...LET OUR REJOICING RISE...

The First Annual Marquis Walker Humanitarian Award Dinner
The African American Lesbian/Gay Alliance will hold an award dinner on
Sunday, October 30 at 5 pm at Paschal's, 830 Martin Luther King Dr.

Dinner, live entertainment, and a lot of fun. Dress is formal or costume (optional).

Tickets are \$20 and are available at Charis Bookstore or by calling 378-6979.

A limited number of tickets will be available at the door.

NCBLG Conference

(continued from page 1)

experience proved informative and revitalizing. You are urged to subscribe to the organization's periodical "BLACK/OUT" for an in-depth look at NCBLG. You may even want to purchase an anniversary poster or tee shirt. Inquire with Ron, John (board members) or Fred (Co-chair). They may even give you the latest on the D.C. night life or shall we say "early-morning living" -- Okay!

(*Black/Out* is published bi-annually at 19641 West Seven Mile, Detroit, MI 48219; subscriptions are \$10 per year) ...

We would like to express our condolences to the family of Danny Wright who passed on Wednesday, October 19, 1988.

Letting Our Hearts Lead the Way

(continued from page 1)

repeated throughout the two days. It is not possible to walk the 5 miles of walkway and not be impacted upon. There are now 8,288 3' x 6' panels. It is estimated that they represent 22% of all those we have lost to AIDS or ARC. That means that for every panel, 3 other people have died.

There are panels for brothers, parents and their children as well as celebrities. Many different kinds of materials were used from Barbie Dolls to silk flowers to cremation ashes to lace, suede, plastic, banners, bed sheets... And they are all beautiful as they lay in their stately grace, beaming to us the love which went into the making and maintaining of each one.

Taking it all in as I did from a crane 3 stories above, despite all the love, there is tremendous anger. ...

Poem

-for all AIDS victims and for all the people that have worked in one way or another with the Names Project.

by Angie

Señor,
que se supone seas
más grande que nosotros
dirige hace aquí tu mirada infinita
y verás un ejército
de hombres y mujeres,
mujeres y hombres
que en desafío
a la injusticia de tu justicia,
que en su intento de sobrellevar su carga de dolor,
en su azaroso y tierno viaje
por las vías de la memoria,
se yerguen más alto que Tú.
Porque del vacío e infértil substrato de la muerte
han creado vida.
Porque desde los portales de lo finito
han sabido crear esperanza.
Porque de su agonía
han podido exprimir risas además de lágrimas.
Porque de las telas de las sábanas mortuorias
han tejido un mosaico de vida y esperanza...
Señor,
levanta tu mirada hacia esta dolorosa
y pintoresca pradera de nombres y de fechas
y llora...

Lord,
you who are supposed to be
greater than us
direct here your infinite stare
and you shall see an army
of men and women
women and men
that in defiance
to the injustice of your justice
in an attempt to carry their burden of pain
in their hazardous and tender journey through
the roads of memory
have risen taller than You.
Because from the empty and barren substratum of death
they have created life.
Because from the gates of the finite
they have learned to create hope.
Because from their agony
they have been able to extract laughter as well as tears.
Because from the cloth of the funereal shrouds
they have woven a mosaic of life and hope...
Lord,
look up towards this painful
and colorful field of names and dates
and weep...

Literature and the Black Aesthetic: Notes from the National Black Arts Festival

by C. Cummings

For nine days this past summer, Atlantans and visitors from out-of-town were treated to an unprecedented offering of concerts, plays, dance performances, films, art exhibitions, symposiums and other arts activities as part of the National Black Arts Festival. Artists as diverse as filmmaker Spike Lee and dancer Garth Fagan came south to let the country know that the artistic achievements of African Americans are second to none.

On Thursday and Friday, August 4th and 5th, the spotlight focused on Black literature and the Black Aesthetic. In panel discussions and workshops spread over the two days, writers Toni Cade-Bambara, Amiri Baraka, Maya Angelou, Askia

Toure, and others discussed the role of literature in the lives and history of African-Americans. They also probed the Black Aesthetic, seeking to identify what it looks like, what it sounds like, and contrasting it with western (European) tradition.

Literature in Our Lives

Literature is much more than the dusty book that has been in your closet since senior year in high school. Toni Cade-Bambara said literature also includes our stories, memoirs, cookbooks, prison papers, pamphlets, liner notes on album covers, remedies, newsletters, eulogies, family reunion programs and other forms of communication. Maya Angelou spoke at length about journal writing and the autobiographical impulse that has spawned much of our literature, including some of her own work. Jerry Ward, literary professor at Tougaloo College, expanded the definition of literature to encompass the black oral tradition. Jesse Jackson's speech at the Democratic National Convention, he said, was an example of black oral literature. These broad definitions of literature helped underscore the fact that literature is not just found in libraries and bookstores, it is all around us in some form or another.

What is literature's function? To Toni Cade-Bambara, a primary function of literature is

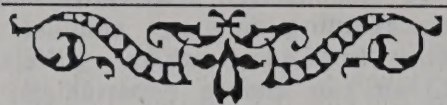
to provide a route to consciousness of how life ought to be lived (responsibly, she added; life should be lived responsibly). We always have four choices regarding how to conduct our lives, according to Cade-Bambara. We can accommodate, we can choose opportunism, we can choose flight, or we can make resistance our choice. Literature comes from resistance, she said. Literature comes from our attempts to show that we are already internally valid. We do not need to continually search outside of ourselves to prove our worth. Similarly, Jerry Ward feels that literature, and literary criticism, can deprogram people from the conservative illiteracy in which so many are trapped. He wants whole communities to become critical, not just the critics, so that we can get away from feeling victimized and powerless. Literature and literacy can help resuscitate the old "19th century backbone."

Cade-Bambara also made a point of touching on the historical importance of literature to African-Americans. Storytelling was banned under colonialism and was heavily monitored under slavery. It was treated as subversive because it preserved the traditions of the people being oppressed. The powers that be wanted (and still want) to say that there is only one valid tradition, the European tradition. Yet the literary tradition of African-Americans survived and has become one of global importance to the world. Internationally recognized metaphors of silence and invisibility grew out of this literary tradition. The metaphors themselves, of course, grew out of the legacies of slavery and bondage.

Does literature continue to impact the social and political reality of black Americans? Jerry Ward said yes, there is an impact, but it is impossible to measure. Jesse Jackson's speech to the Democratic convention had an impact, for example, but it is difficult to pin down the specific effects of his speech. Black voter turnout may go up, political participation may increase, but no one really knows. Perhaps more important to Ward is the idea that literature promotes literacy, and literacy will help break the "passive cognition" rampant in this country. Analytical thinking is discouraged in this society; literacy will help reverse this disinclination to think.

(continued on page 8)

Saccharin Tales



Sweet Sisters and Brothers,

My own experience teaches me that in spite of all the love I have for my biological family there have been significant moments when my own "gay family" has provided what my birth parents and sibling could not. Survival in this not so accepting society as lesbians and gays is very dependent on our ability to foster our own support network of persons who share our sexual orientation and/or those who can accept positively our personhoods without reservations.

There are a few of us who experience unconditional relating with our birth families. It, however, is a sad reality that, for most, that kind of relating is a goal we hope for, work for, or wish would enter the realm of possibility before we finish this chance at life.

My own new "happy" family is fairly extensive, and I have hundreds of associates many people with whom I share friendships of varying degrees. My most intimate circle involves mainly the two men with whom I share a home. I correctly use the word home because they are more than just humans who help with the rent and stay in "that" part of the house. We each have an interdependence with each other, just as families do.

The value of this kind of living arrangement for me is priceless. It is demanding but all family living arrangements are because there is a contribution one gives and is expected to give beyond a share of the expenses.

It is positive because our romantic interests are welcomed here. It is positive because after an attack from the outside world, I am safe here in what one of my roommates refers to as "gay space". It is positive because, when we have experienced losses —financial, romantic, family deaths, and other emotional traumas, we nurture and take care of each other.

We also fight, wrestle, and argue just like family. It's great!

As three men who are not all the same race, from three distinct areas of the country, we strive to form a bond based on something other than a business agreement, which makes our home a political statement. We say something about men in non-traditional roles relating in what may be termed an "alternative lifestyle living arrangement." For all practical purposes, it is working well.

Relating even in a familial way with others is risk taking. I am advocating that gays and lesbians examine how our lives can be or are being enriched when we take that risk.

The risk of accepting and creating our own new families can be further expanded when we attend events sponsored by regional and national gay and lesbian organizations. My visit to Washington D.C. while the Names Project returned afforded me the company of many new brothers in chapters of Black & White Men Together (BWMT) and Men of All Colors Together from across the country.

BWMT-D.C. sponsored an anniversary celebration weekend and, at a brunch held that Sunday, I found myself "carrying on" with two other members at our table for six. None of us had met before, but we each had very similar backgrounds; two of us are performing artists. It took no formalities to acquaint us and put us at ease with each other and "to dish."

This was nothing unusual. I believe it is also true of those among our membership who have attended NCBLG (National Conference of Black Lesbians and Gays) functions, national gay/lesbian sports events, and even our own locally sponsored regional Southeastern Conference for Lesbians and Gays.

When we become part of families that reach beyond our state and even national boundaries we change our perceptions of the lone sissy struggling for survival or the lost dyke in need of direction. My own connecting with the men-of-color in particular with Black & White M.T. has helped me to see that organization as a much more supportive group.

Our strength, especially in the future, will lie in our ability to exist as families that we have forged out of our community to love, accept, and affirm our lives.

—Amethyst Pride

The Hammonds House African American Art Resource Center

by Robin

In 1986 the Fulton County Board of Commissioners purchased the home of the late Dr. Otis T. Hammonds, M.D. This mid-nineteenth century Victorian-style home now serves a resource center for the study of African American Art. Located at 503 Peoples St., SW in Atlanta's West End district, Hammonds House is to develop a national center for the exhibition, preservation and research of African American art. Hammonds House will offer variety of programs to promote awareness of the contributions of African American artists. In an attempt to fill a national need for research materials Hammonds House will also offer access to books, slides, catalogues, films, videos, microfiche and a computer data base on the histories of artists of African descent. Through computer links the center will connect with research centers in New York, Washington, D.C., and New Orleans.

Dr. Otis T. Hammonds, the previous owner of the house, was an art patron who amassed an impressive collection of African American art dating from as early as the mid-nineteenth century. His collection, purchased along with the house, includes African sculptures and masks, Haitian paintings, and African American art in a variety of forms. Some of the African American artists represented in the collection are: Romare Bearden, Sam Gilliam, Benny Andrews, Richard Hunt, Elizabeth Catlett, Tina Dunkley, David Driskell, Hale Woodruff, Nellie Mae Rowe, Freddie Styles, Lizetta Lafolle, Jenelse Holloway, Lev Mills, Zach Anderson, Louis Delsarte, John Riddle and Gary Porter. The collection also contains works by over a dozen Haitian artists.

Currently Hammonds House contains two main exhibits. The first exhibit is a collection of photographs by P. H. Polk. Born in Alabama in 1898 Polk spent most of his career in Tuskegee, Alabama chronicling the lives of black people in and around Tuskegee Institute since 1927. This particular exhibit features several photographs of famed black thinker Dr. George Washington Carver. The second exhibit is a collection of collage works by Romare Bearden. Working with biblical as well as mythological and modern themes

Bearden created collages with both western and African looks and feelings. Some of the works in the collection were gifts from the artist to Dr. Hammonds.

Although there is no admission charge, it is possible to support the project by becoming a member of Hammonds House. •••

Autobiography: In Her Own Image

by C. Cummings

A provocative exhibition of works by women artists of color is currently on view at Nexus Contemporary Art Center. The exhibition, entitled "Autobiography: In Her Own Image," presents works by 20 women of African, Asian, Hispanic, and Native American heritage. The collected paintings, photographs, drawings and mixed media pieces offer widely varied observations about each artist's life. According to Howardena Pindell, organizer of the exhibit, Autobiography "...presents a view of the artist of color interpreting herself in the context of her choice, which may not be particularly pleasing to the "dominant" culture."

One major strength of the exhibit is the unique approach taken by some of the artists to express their themes. Adrian Piper's "What Will Become of Me" consists of jars of hair, skin, and clipped nails, evidence of the slow physical and psychological unravelling she experienced while seeking tenure as a philosophy professor at the University of Michigan. Clarissa Sligh's "Reframing the Past" seems to begin as an homage to her childhood family, but through a series of photographs framed by "See Spot Run" text she unveils sexual abuse by her older brother. Sophie Rivera chooses toilet bowls (and their contents) as the surprising focus of her book of photography, "Bowl Study." (A sign over the book requests visitors to put on a pair of white cotton gloves before flipping through the book). And Yong Soon Min's "Agitprop #1" presents her geopolitical view of the world in the form of a free-standing sculpture.

At the heart of the exhibit, in terms of both layout and theme, is "Taking Another Look," by Asiba Tupahache. Tupahache displays excerpts from a book she has written which

(continued on page 6)

Autobiography

(continued from page 5)

deals with the "...ongoing assault on human dignity justified by racism and maintained through a behavioral illness called 'bigotry.'" Surrounding the book excerpts are images from ad campaigns, greeting cards, and toys which show the character assassination pervasive in pop culture. The images include the subservient "Indian squaw" on the Land-O-Lakes butter cartons, the all-too-familiar faces on the Aunt Jemimah and Cream of Wheat boxes, and the stern Native American face in full feathers on the Red Man chewing tobacco pouch.

Tupahache's excerpts go on to state that assaults on human dignity stem from a distorted need for power. Child abuse, battering a mate, and cult-like oppression of the vulnerable are common manifestations of this distorted need. However, in order for these assaults to become self-perpetuating over generations, a "perpetrator" is in some way aided by a "victim" and a "facilitator." Tupahache probes the psychology of each of these three components necessary to perpetuate assault. Ultimately, she describes the "survivor" who confronts the criminal assault and accepts that it has occurred. She hopes that we will all become survivors. "The survivors will understand and educate themselves about all aspects of the criminal violation...The survivors of racism must research and understand history to get through the cover-ups."

The exhibition will be at Nexus through November 12. Admission to the gallery is free. Call Nexus for hours. Also showing through November 12 is an exhibit of Women Photographers. Nexus is located at 608 Ralph McGill Boulevard. ...

Fair Housing

Despite the Fair Housing Act of 1968 a recent study funded by the Department of Housing and Urban development found that a black family looking to purchase a home stands a 48% chance of running into discrimination. Black families looking to rent stand a 72% chance of encountering discrimination. The Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988, creates a new procedure for handling housing disputes. The new, procedure is designed to save time and money for the plaintiff as well as the defendant. If you believe you have been the victim of housing discrimination contact HUD at their toll free hotline: 1-800-424-8590.

Emory Expands Non-Discrimination Policy Statement

by Robin

In May of 1987, some members of the Emory Lesbian and Gay Organization (ELGO) formed a separate group called the Task Force on Equal Opportunity to work toward the inclusion of the words "sexual orientation" in Emory University's Equal Opportunity Statement. After months of work the Task Force amassed a 60 page proposal which included the results of a survey conducted by the group, personal narratives by ELGO members documenting on-campus incidents of homophobia, and a list of faculty and staff who signed a statement in support of the proposal.

The proposal was first presented to the Campus Life Committee of the Board of Trustees in December of 1987. The proposal was then presented to the full Board of Trustees in May of 1988. In July of 1988 the Board voted the proposal down and decided to only state those groups required by federal law in the Equal Opportunity Statement. In August of 1988 James T. Laney, President of the University, drew up a statement of University Policy which states that "For some years, Emory University has had in place a policy on sexual harrassment, defining the types of interference —whether blatant or subtle— with the lives of students, faculty and staff that are unacceptable in our community. It now seems appropriate to extend that same explicit understanding to cover all kinds of discriminatory harrassment, whether it is based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, *sexual orientation*, age, handicap or veteran's status."

Although the Board's approval was not needed for the statement of Policy, the Board voted unanimously to endorse the Policy which covers the entire Emory community. ...

Crossroads is produced by the African American Lesbian Gay Alliance for the people and the organizations that make up and support the black lesbian/gay community. This monthly newsletter reports the events and activities of our community concerns. Unsolicited contributions are welcomed and encouraged.

African Diaspora

by C. Cummings

Over the centuries, over 100 million Africans have been uprooted from Africa and taken to other lands. This forced removal and resettlement of the people of Africa, also known as the African Diaspora, forms the backdrop for a collection of photographs at the Woodruff Library of the Atlanta University Center. Photographer and writer Armet Francis's exhibit, entitled "The Black Triangle: People of the African Diaspora," shows present-day faces of Africans in Jamaica, the Bahamas, Britain, and Harlem, as well as in Zimbabwe, Kenya and other countries on the African continent. The photos are interspersed with historical information tracing how and why the Diaspora took place.

Armet Francis was born and grew up in what he refers to as the black triangle. Geographically, the triangle is an area whose three points are Africa, the Americas, and Europe. Africans are present at all points of the triangle because of the economics of the slave trade: European ships and guns travelled to Africa in search of slaves, the strong hands and backs that would build the economic foundation of the "New World;" the slave-laden ships then travelled across the Atlantic to the New World, where slaves were traded for money and raw materials; the money and raw materials were then brought back to Europe as healthy profits which funded, among other things, further slave expeditions to Africa. Despite the reprehensible origins of the black triangle, Francis recognizes it as home for all of us. In his particular case, for example, he was born in Jamaica, his ancestors are African, and he currently lives in England. Through his photographs, he tries to transcend the legacy of the slave trade and redefine the legs of the triangle in humanitarian rather than economic terms. Humanity, Insight, and Compassion should become the cornerstones of the triangle, he professes.

Indeed, his 77 photographs succeed in reminding us of our common humanity by providing insight into how people smile in Senegal, how they dance in Brixton, how they work in Jamaica, and how they play in Harlem. His photographs ignite our

compassion by showing that a man he might photograph in Nigeria could look just like your uncle in Greenwood, Mississippi. Our African heritage is very real and very much alive.

The historical information, the "Black Chronology" as Francis calls it, traces important African events back to 4000 BC. It is inspiring to be reminded that the history of Africa is, in many ways, older and richer than the history of Europe. It is also sobering, however, to be reminded of how Africa has been and continues to be ravaged. Of the 100 million Africans taken from Africa, only 25 million are estimated to have made it to the western hemisphere. The rest died somewhere in transit.

"The Black Triangle: People of the Diaspora" can be seen through November 30 in the Virginia Lacey Jones Exhibition Hall, on the second floor of the Woodruff Library. The library is located on James P. Brawley Dr., near Morehouse College. ...

US Parks Service Learns to Count

by Robin

After over a year the US Park Service finally revised its official estimate of the number of people who attended last year's march on Washington D.C. for gay rights. The official number jumped from 250,000 to 650,000, making the march in October, 1987 the largest civil rights march in the history of this country.

This year the US Park Police estimated the turn out at the candlelight vigil at the Reflecting Pool in Washington, D.C. at 8,600. If the Park Service is consistent in its mathematical ineptitude we can safely say at least 22,360 people showed up at the candlelight vigil. It looked like a lot more people to me. ...



We need a female co-editor to help with *Crossroads*. If you have some ideas on what you would like to see in future issues of *Crossroads* and you have a few hours a month you can devote to making those ideas a reality we could use your help. If interested in helping please contact Sabrina at 378-6979.

Literature and the Black Aesthetic

(continued from page 3)

The Black Aesthetic

The panelists at a Thursday night symposium took a step back from the question of the role and impact of literature and concentrated instead on attempting to define what has been referred to as the Black Aesthetic. Is there some artistic sensibility inherent in people of African heritage which is fundamentally different from the European tradition? The panelists felt that, indeed, a distinct Black Aesthetic does exist and is alive and well today.

Author Eugene Redmond offered perhaps the best description of the Black Aesthetic. It is "the way we do the things we do," he said. He then proceeded to list six Principles of the Black Aesthetic:

1. Predominance of percussive performance
2. Call and response
3. Polyrhythms and polymetrics
4. Syncopation
5. Metronome sense (sense of coolness and balance)
6. Songs and dances of social allusion

"Blacks abhor a straight line," Redmond said, quoting another author. Amiri Baraka added to this, saying that in the Black Aesthetic feeling is primary, feeling is content, form is transitional. The frenzy, the bright colors, expressionism are all part of our tradition. As is our "songified language," added Redmond. "Music is hip to us because it's the closest thing to the spirit," Baraka continued. The linear logic of the European tradition is not enough to understand black culture, offered another panelist.

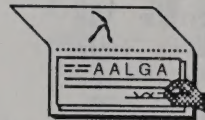
It is important to understand and preserve our own aesthetics because Black art is intimately linked to Black self-determination, according to Baraka. And anything or anyone who betrays our right to self-determination must be opposed, he continued. Art can transform the world; art is what life is.

Read and Listen

Literature is a major conduit of the Black Aesthetic. During the course of the two days,

all the writers were unanimous in suggesting how we all could become more literate: read, read, read! They recommended books for young adults (*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, by Maya Angelou, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, by Zora Neal Hurston, *Souls of Black Folks*, W.E.B. DuBois), as well as books for adults (*The Death of Rhythm and Blues*, by Nelson George, *Youngblood*, by John Oliver Killens, *Goodbye Sweetwater*, by Henry Dumas, *Be-Bop Re-Bop*, by Cartier, writings by Harold Cruz, the writings of W.E.B. DuBois, *Beloved*, by Toni Morrison, and others.) And they also said to listen, in particular to the music of a group named Public Enemy. Amiri Baraka called their music the most advanced art on the planet.

As we become more conscious of our lives, the external, material security blankets we sometimes cling to may begin to fall away. As Maya Angelou stated, don't count on having anything; live life as a process of discovery. "If a telephone call can let you know that you ain't got something, you never had it." Something we do have, however, is an artistic tradition which has withstood the tests of bondage and oppression, and which will survive as long as we take the time to open our eyes and ears. ...



Do you enjoy getting this newsletter? Membership in AALGA costs only \$25 per year and runs from July 1 until June 30 of the following year. Your dues are used to pay for our meeting space, the production of *CROSSROADS*, and to help finance some of our social functions. If you need more information about paying dues contact Sabrina at 378-6979. Take the time out to send in your dues today, the benefits of membership far outweigh the costs.

Those of you who are on our mailing list who do not live in the Atlanta area can also help out by sending a contribution to AALGA.

There is a **SUBliminal Message In This** sentence. *Crossroads* P.O. Box 50374, Atlanta, GA 30302. Next deadline November 18 1988.

We Came Together

by John S.

The Women's and Men's Caucuses of AALGA came together for their first joint caucus since their respective inceptions on Saturday, October 15. Twenty gay and lesbian persons met at the home of Sandy and Sabrina. Sabrina Sojourner, AALGA's co-chair, facilitated the meeting.

The caucus was attended by AALGA members and perspective members with a near equal mix of women and men. Caucus participants were open about their feelings and respectful of others' on the topic of "Socializing in a Co-sexual Environment." The purpose for this discussion was three-fold: the need for sexual parity, the perceived lack of female participation at social and fund-raising events, and the need to address sexism in the gay community.

It was brought out that while female participation has been lacking at a number of events, there have been events where male participation was low as well. Persons of both sexes, while offering reasoning for this phenomenon, stated that they had difficulty dealing with flamboyant men. Some felt that this behavior is a mockery of females and often leads to insulting behavior has a problem, these men's behavior patterns are their are their means of self-expression that have no accompanying agenda. Others said that they had no problems interacting with those of the opposite sex and, in some cases, were surprised that these problems existed.

As a solution, may expressed that as persons in the life and in the struggle need to stop and simply consider each other's humanness. It is through these eyes that we find a common bond and, I add, the strength to unite. Individuals who felt the need to speak out against insulting attitudes that might arise at future gatherings were offered firm

support by both male and female participants of the group.

The caucus ended with expressions of wanting to come together again several times during the year. A pot luck dinner was enjoyed along with background music, festive card-playing and just old getting to know each other better.

If I knew you and you knew me,
And each of us could clearly see
By that inner light divine
The meaning of your heart and mine;
I'm sure that we would differ less
And clasp our hands in friendliness
If I knew you, and you knew me.

(This poem, whose author is unknown to the writer, is taken from Mysticism and the Experience of Love by Howard Thurman.)

(Editor's note: men outnumber women by almost 2:1 on our AALGA mailing list, this could go long a way towards explaining why the male members of our group often seem to outnumber the female members at functions. Perhaps both male and female members should be actively trying to increase our female membership.) ...

Past and Future...

At the October AALGA general meeting we discussed some of the final arrangements for the Marquis Walker Humanitarian Award Dinner and what the future of AALGA should look like. Some of the things mentioned as future projects were outreach programs to both younger and older black lesbians and gays. Several members stated an interest in either establishing a support network of our own or working with existing support networks that do outreach to gay youth.

The November 6 meeting will be a time to recap the Award Dinner, make future plans for the December holidays, and to continue with our discussion of outreach programs.

AALGA MEMBERSHIP REPLY CARD

- ☐ Please send me more information about AALGA.
- ☐ Please add my name to the AALGA membership list.
- ☐ Please renew my AALGA membership.
- ☐ I have enclosed my \$25 yearly membership fee.

Name _____

Address _____

City & State _____ Phone _____

November Calendar

Sep. 25 - Nov. 6.....**Art and Document: P.H. Polk's Photographs** at Hammonds House, Galleries and Resource Center of African-American Art. 503 Peoples St., SW. Call 752-8215 for info.

Saturday, October 29.....**National Ballet of Senegal**, 8 pm at the Civic Center.

Monday, October 31.....**Romanovsky and Philips Concert**, 8 pm, at the Unitarian Church. Call 377-8312 for info.

Sunday, October 30..**MARQUIS WALKER HUMANITARIAN AWARD DINNER.**, 5 pm at Paschals', 830 Martin Luther King Jr. Dr. **Dinner and Live Entertainment.** This will be AALGA's Gala event of the season and with it we mark our second anniversary and honor one of our founding members, the late Marquis Walker. Formal Attire or Costume (optional). Tickets are \$20 and are available at Charis Bookstore or call 378-6979 for tickets and more information. Everyone Invited.

Friday, November 4.....**Lynn Lavner & Doug Lothes**, 7:30 & 9:30 at the Colective Theater. A SAME Production. Call 875-7263 fot info.

Sunday, November 6.....**AALGA General Meeting**, 4 pm. Open to Everyone. Call 378-6979.

Tuesday, November 8...**Election Day.** Get out and vote.

Friday, November 11....**Women of Color Caucus Meeting**, Potluck/Networking, at Sabrina's and Sandy's home, at 6:30 pm, call 378-6979 for info.

Thursday, November 24.....**Thanksgiving Open House**, 6 pm. Call Ron at 297-8815 or Carolyn at 691-5921.

Friday, November 25....**Women of Color Caucus Meeting**, Potluck/Support, at Diane's home, at 6:30 pm, call 669-0935 for info.

For Informantion on the Men's Caucus call Ron at 297-8815.

Help Wanted: Actors, Actresses and Musicians needed for upcoming project, if interested contact Sabrina at 378-6979.

The basic purposes of AALGA include: to work against racism, sexism, and homophobia in all communities; to create positive attitude between and among black non-gays and gays; to improve the relationships between black lesbians and gay men; to maintain and stress the beauty of black culture and lesbian/gay culture; and to build a strong political and economic base for black lesbians and gay men.

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Tell us what you think about what AALGA:

CROSSROADS

THE NEWS OF THE AFRICAN AMERICAN LESBIAN/GAY ALLIANCE

VOLUME 2, NO. 4

MAY, 1988

NAMES PROJECT QUILT COMING TO ATLANTA

In mid-1988, the human dimensions of the AIDS crisis will be dramatically brought home to cities around the United States when the NAMES Project Quilt is displayed in the 24 largest U.S. metropolitan areas.

The national tour began in early April and will conclude in late July. The quilt contains thousands of individual 3-foot by 6-foot panels, each commemorating an individual who died from AIDS, and covers an area larger than three football fields. The panels contain a variety of fabrics and colors and often convey the personality and interest of the memorialized person. Some panels include only the name of the departed individual, but many of the hand-made panels incorporate mementoes of the deceased's life-- a favorite garment, a lock of hair, symbols of a promising career or fondly remembered hobby. Many of the panels were made by friends or relatives of the persons they commemorate. Others were prepared at the San Francisco headquarters of the NAMES Project by dozens of volunteer workers, who labor over sewing machines. Most of the panels on the quilt include the full names of the individuals commemorated, but some panels include only first names or nicknames. Panels with first names only sometimes are sent by relatives who fear embarrassment or harassment if it becomes known that a family member died of AIDS. More than two

dozen panels are anonymous. Individual panels are sewn onto 12-foot blocks of canvas bordered by metal-ringed holes. This permits rows of panels to be laced together for display as a single massive quilt, or taken apart for easy transport or storage.

The NAMES Project Quilt was conceived by Cleve Jones, a 32-year-old San Franciscan, who is currently the Project's Executive Director. Jones came up with the idea in 1985 following a candlelight march for assassinated San Francisco Supervisor Harvey Milk, but didn't act on it until October 1986, when his best friend died of AIDS. The quilt was first publicly unveiled at a dawn ceremony held on the mall in Washington, D.C. October 11, 1987, a few hours before the March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights. Thousands attended a sunrise service at which the names of the memorialized were read solemnly. The quilt covered an area the size of two football fields on the Mall. Canvas walkways between the rows of panels allowed numerous mourners to view all of the 1,920 individual pieces of the quilt.

Since its founding, the NAMES Project has evolved from personal catharsis --one man's response to the loss of his best friend-- into a catalyst for public awareness and collective action. It has moved beyond commemoration only those whose names it bears to serving as a national memorial to all Americans struck down by AIDS. The quilt includes panels for celebrities such as Liberace and Rock Hudson,

(continued on next page)

"Chorus Line" choreographer Michael Bennett, Willi Smith, and Dr. Tom Waddell, organizer of the Gay Games.

After its Washintong debut, the quilt was disassembled and returned to San Francisco, where volunteers inspected each panel and made any necessary repairs. Hundreds of additional panels not received in time for the display on the Mall were added.

Organizers estimate that by the time the NAMES Project memorial leaves on its national tour in the Spring of 1988, it will include panels remembering more than 4,000 persons who have died because of AIDS.

NAMES Project representatives say the 1988 nationwide tour with the quilt has three primary goals:

- to illustrate the enormity of the epidemic by showing the humanity behind the statistics;

- to provide a positive and creative means of expression for those whose lives have been touched by AIDS; and

- to raise funds and encourage support for Persons with AIDS and their loved ones.

The quilt will be displayed in Atlanta on May 29th and 30th, Memorial Day Weekend, at the World Congress Center.

**[Reprinted in part from the
National AIDS Network Monitor]**

THE LESBIAN AND GAY COMMUNITY NEEDS ALL THE RIGHTS IT CAN GET

(The following is a campaign message from the New Alliance Party)

Democratic and liberal Republican leaders alike have become more and more timid on the issue of lesbian and gay rights. Millions of lesbian and gay voters are no longer regarded as a

"constituency" but a "liability." In public we are called a "special interest," in private "diseased degenerates." We are told that in the 1988 Presidential election, we must get back into the closet.

This refusal to support our civil rights and encourage the active participation of lesbians and gay men in the 1988 Presidential election is, like AIDS, not just our problem. The breakdown of our democratic system, like the failure of our immunological system, is a crisis for all Americans.

With the democratic rights of many Americans -- Blacks, women, gays and the poor -- becoming undermined by the overall erosion of democracy, the AIDS epidemic opens the door to even further gross violations of the constitutional rights of gays and other people with AIDS. Stigmatization, isolation, and incarceration are becoming the "legitimate" range of responses to People with AIDS.

This attack on democracy and the civil rights of gays and People with AIDS must be stopped. In 1988, there will be a package of proposed federal legislation designed to protect and advance the civil and social rights of lesbians and gay men. We call for its passage in the 100th Session of Congress. And we call on all candidates for public office, especially all Presidential candidates -- to come out of their closet and make their positions on the entire legislative package known to us and all voters. **A FEDERAL AIDS BILL OF RIGHTS** - To outlaw mandatory HIV testing and to protect the civil and democratic rights of PWAs, people with AIDS related diseases and people perceived as having AIDS. This legislation has been drafted off of the San Francisco and New York versions. **A FEDERAL LESBIAN AND GAY RIGHTS BILL** -- To guarantee to lesbians and gay men the full and equal constitutional rights due all Americans. This bill, H.R. 709, was initially introduced in 1978 by

(continued on page 3)

Congressman Ted Weiss (D-NY). A REVERSAL OF HARDWICK RULING ON GEORGIA'S ANTI-SODOMY LAWS --

This ruling deprives Americans of our constitutional rights of freedom of association and privacy in our homes guaranteed by the I, IV and XIV Amendments. Legislation which would overturn the Hardwick Anti-Sodomy ruling is being drafted for introduction by the end of the year. **A NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE --** To make decent health care available to all people as a right not as a privilege only for those who can afford it. This bill, H.R. 2402, was drafted by Congressman Ron Dellums (D-CA) in 1975.

It is the AIDS Bill of Rights which has provoked the greatest controversy within the gay movement itself. Some gay leaders -- those associated with the Democratic Party -- have opposed a local AIDS Bill of Rights because it would "stigmatize AIDS" which "tends to underscore hysteria." Another opponent said "The interpretation (of the bill) could be that existing legislation is inadequate." But it is specifically because PWAs are stigmatized that special protection is required. Moreover, existing legislation is inadequate. Any and every reinforcement of civil and constitutional rights must be supported. With the rise of anti-gay and racist hysteria and violence, there is no such thing as too much protection for victims of discrimination.

There is one candidate in the 1988 Presidential election who unconditionally supports the enactment of an AIDS Bill of Rights. Dr. Lenora B. Fulani, a community, women's and civil rights leader from New York, is an independent candidate for President of the U.S. Dr. Fulani has a distinguished record as a spokesperson for civil liberties causes, who appears regularly on television and radio in all major cities reaching all major markets. She is outspokenly pro-gay.

The campaign is part of a plan called

"Two Roads Is Better Than One." It calls for vigorously supporting Rev. Jesse Jackson's quest for the Democratic Party nomination, but in the event that he is denied the nomination by the anti-human, pro-war, rampantly homophobic major parties, Fulani will be on the ballot in all 50 states -- the first time in history that a Black independent will be running in every state in the country. In other words, the rainbow vote does have somewhere else to go. Dr. Fulani has already begun to travel back and forth across the country, appearing where all the Presidential candidates are: before civil rights groups, community organizations, religious and gay and women's groups and the media. She presents her message of the need to fight for fair elections and democracy wherever she goes. Her national tours are designed to educate American voters to critical policy issues so that the voters themselves may ask the hard and serious questions of all the candidates. She wants the people -- and not a high-priced Madison Avenue advertising campaign -- to shape a democratic dialogue in 1988. And she believes that the majority of Americans -- gay and straight -- favor a public policy in support of lesbian and gay rights. It is that majoritarian message that must be heard in 1988. Support the lobbying effort for the four-part legislative package. Support Lenora B. Fulani's Committee for Fair Elections with a matchable donation. For qualified Presidential primary campaigns, every dollar raised is matched by the federal government. As Fulani states, "You've got to support this campaign, but not just voting for me. You've got to take it out to everyone you know, and you've got to make a huge contribution to it!" The goal for the next 5 months is to raise \$1 million dollars. Many people are becoming sponsors and contributing between \$50 and the legal matchable limit of \$250. Give as much as you can. Your contribution not only supports this crucial lobbying effort, it brings your own tax dollars into action for a pro-gay agenda. Mail

(continued on next page)

contributions to: 475 5th Avenue, Suite 1500, NY, NY 10017. Payable to Lenora B. Fulani's Committee for Fair Elections. The check must be filled out with black ink and your name and address must show on the face of the check for matchability.

GOODBYE TO CRAWFORD

Chuck Cummings

"Jerry wondered if it might just rain forever like this; rain so hard it beat everything back into the ground; the houses, the cars and the people. Everything we know of, he pondered, smashed to nothing by the simple forces of nature."

- Crawford J.

Driving south on route 441, heading for Milledgeville, we could see patches of dark rain clouds mixed in with the bland gray skies ahead of us. The closer we got to the historic middle Georgia town, the more frequently the two-lane highway turned slippery with fresh precipitation. I couldn't remember if it was a good sign or a bad sign: rain during a funeral. I could have asked Duncan, but we both felt the quiet inside the car was appropriate.

"Two hours and I'll be home, he mused. Home and dry, home is where the heart is, home sweet home, home on the range, home is where you take your ass when you're broke."

Neither Duncan nor I knew precisely where we were going. We had both been to Milledgeville before; we had visited Crawford in the hospital a couple of times during the previous five weeks. But Duncan had never been to Crawford's home. I had not been there in three years. And our search for Mt. Nebo Baptist Church, where the funeral services were to be held, was certainly a search for Crawford's home. His parents would be there, his brother, his sisters, relatives, teachers, classmates, sympathizers, the curious, they all would be there. All of Crawford's middle Georgia homeland would be represented between the four walls of a tiny country church. We did not know where the church was located, but we knew that we too had to be there. We were just as much a part of Crawford's home as anyone else, perhaps moreso. We were his next of kin. Instinctively, we knew we could find the final home of our brother.

We stopped to ask for directions. The white clerk at the Holiday Inn in Milledgeville had no idea where Mt. Nebo Church was located. A white man in his 40s who had overheard my conversation with the front desk clerk swore he knew, but his directions amounted to a wild goose chase ending at an isolated intersection of two country roads. But wouldn't you know it, sitting at the stop sign at this intersection, in the middle of nowhere, waiting to make a left turn, was an elderly black couple in an old red Buick. I ran out of the car, tapped on the Buick as it began to make its turn, and was soon staring in the face of a rather frightened man. After we had both calmed down, he said that he had indeed been to the church, that it was "back over there," pointing towards the woods, but that he wasn't sure how to get there from here. However, he eventually gave me directions which, except for a fork in the road he forgot to mention, landed us in the front parking lot of Mt. Nebo Baptist Church.

(continued on page 5)

"A sense of danger sent a tingling through his body. Danger born in the secret hope that some tragedy would prevent the bus from ever reaching Milledgeville. A mishap that would kill most of the people on the bus and leave him gravely injured. Oh, how they would come and hold their vigil around my hospital bed while I lay on the edges of death, he thought."

The service had already begun. The pastor was delivering, singing almost, the eulogy. Deacons responded to the minister's call in harmonized "Amen's" and "Yes Lords." Duncan and I were seated in the front pew, across the aisle from Crawford's immediate family. The front of the church was filled with flowers, a testament to the many lives Crawford had touched. A deaconess read the cards attached to the flowers: family friends expressed condolences, fraternity brothers from Georgia Tech and Georgia College sent words of comfort, newspaper associates in Lexington acknowledged their sadness, anonymous grievors from Atlanta and beyond spoke of sympathy, relatives expressed their devastation. Small town boy never wanted to go back, brought back by unforeseeable tragedy. Crawford travelled far to get away from Milledgeville: to Atlanta, to Arizona, to Kentucky. Wherever he had been, he was remembered. And he carried memories of those places wherever he went. Small town boy carried some of the small town with him, always.

"Is there anything wrong, are you sick?" he asked cautiously. She sniffed, drew in a long breath and turned back to him. Both eyes were swollen and red.

"You will have to excuse me, but I'm going to Milledgeville on sad business..."

"Are you going home for a funeral?"

"Lord, yes," she said, still staring at nothing. "My sister's boy, 'bout your age. A fine young man."

Crawford was buried in the graveyard next to the church. The sun came out just before the graveside ceremony and remained bright and warm the rest of the day. Good sign? Bad sign? It didn't matter. The sunshine could not melt away the grief, not yet. We all cried together. After the ceremony, we lingered around the gravesite reliving the pain and frustrations of the last few weeks and sifting through dusty memories stored in old shoeboxes. "Let him go," an older woman whispered to a younger woman in tears. "He's gone now, you can't hold on to him." Somehow I felt those words were meant for me. Whatever dreams, desires, delusions I had regarding Crawford were forced to resolve themselves. Crawford had moved on. A fine young man.

As we drove back to Atlanta, Duncan and I reminisced about the way Crawford laughed, a crazy trip to New York Crawford and I took, Crawford's big feet. Laughter followed the tears, relief followed the pain. For the first time, I noticed that it was spring.

"A kind of tension permeated the air of the small town that Friday night and Jerry felt an excitement uncoil in his stomach... Jerry picked up the light blue suitcase and started walking home, revelling in the cool, fresh air."

[The quotations are excerpts from a story written by Crawford in 1983]

CROSSROADS

THE NEWS OF THE AFRICAN AMERICAN LESBIAN/ GAY ALLIANCE

VOLUME 2, NO. 9

December 1988

We Came Together to Honor and Remember

by Robin

On Sunday October 31 AALGA held the First Annual Marquis Walker Memorial Humanitarian Award Dinner. In an evening filled with love, memories and shared hopes for the future we gathered at Paschal's to feast upon a meal for both the body and the spirit. The over seventy people in attendance at the dinner were almost evenly mixed with regard to both race and gender, a rarity at any event in our communities.

The night opened with a rendition of The Black National Anthem (Lift Every Voice and Sing). The co-chairs of AALGA, Sabrina and Fred, presided over the evening's activities. Stirring and uplifting song was provided throughout the evening by professional singer Chris Barlow (who graciously donated her time), Amethyst Pride, and Carolyn Mobley. The keynote address was given by Michael Lomax, chair-person of the Fulton County Board of Commissioners. In this his second time addressing an AALGA function, Lomax spoke of the appropriateness of the dinner being held at Paschal's Restaurant. He noted that historically Paschal's was a place at the forefront of many civil rights movements in this country. He called for a new movement to come forth from Atlanta, one that demanded that the rights of all people be respected regardless of things such as sexual orientation.

Prior to the presentation of the Humanitarian Award a special award was given to Mercedes Arnold in memory of her two sons who have passed, and in testimony to her strength and courage in the face of death. This special award was a surprise to Ms. Arnold but her impromptu acceptance speech gave strength and hope to many in the audience.

The Humanitarian Award

The award was given in honor of one of AALGA's founding members and its first co-chair, the late Marquis Walker. It was designed for an individual who has demonstrated outstanding achievement in the areas upon which AALGA was founded: to

(continued on page 2)

Kwanzaa '88

by Kamau

Marquis Walker, a founder of AALGA, coined a phrase which we have adapted as our motto: "As proud of our gayness as we are of our blackness." Throughout this year we have focused much of our energy on our gayness. It is only fitting that we end this, our most successful year, with an uplifting of our African and African American heritage. This year AALGA will be observing its third consecutive Kwanzaa celebration. With Kwanzaa we shall reaffirm our blackness. Our theme for this year: "Celebrating our African American Heritage Every Day of Our Lives."

The word Kwanzaa is taken from the East African language of Kiswahili and means "thwee first fruits of the harvest." Kwanzaa is unique in that it is neither a religious, political nor heroic celebration, but rather a cultural one. It is estimated that more than 13 million people participate in Kwanzaa celebrations throughout the country each year. Kwanzaa is observed each year from Dec. 26 to Jan.1.

Kwanzaa was founded in 1966 by Dr. Maulana Karenga, a Black studies professor who describes himself as a cultural nationalist. Kwanzaa originated as a cultural idea and not as a substitute for Christmas or any other holiday. Dr. Karenga recognized the undue hardship that the over-commercialization of Christmas has for African Americans and others who are at the lowest rung of the social strata. Kwanzaa has given us an option to be able to celebrate our heritage as well as the traditional holidays.

Kwanzaa is based on seven principles referred to as the Nguzo Saba. On each day one of the principles is expounded upon. We discuss and process how this principle can serve as a guide for our daily living. The principles are as follows:

1.Umoja (Unity)

To strive and maintain unity in the family, community, nation, and race.

2.Kujichagulia (Self-determination)

To define ourselves, name ourselves, create for ourselves and speak for ourselves instead of being defined, named, created for and spoken for by others.

(continued on page 2)

KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN FOR THE UPCOMING AALGA KWANZAA EVENTS

Kwanzaa '88

(continued from page 2)

3. Ujima (Collective work and responsibility)

To build and maintain our community together and make our sister's and brother's problems our problems and to solve them together.

4. Ujama (Cooperative economics)

To build and maintain our own stores, shops, and other businesses and to profit from them together.

5. Nia (Purposes)

To make our collective vocation the building and development of our community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness.

6. Kuumba (Creativity)

To do always as much as we can, in the way we can, in order to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than we inherited it.

7. Imani (Faith)

To believe with all our hearts in our people, our parents, our teachers, our leaders and the righteousness and victory of our struggle.

Dr. Maulana Karenga

7 September, 1965

Each day is celebrated by the lighting of a candle representing the principle for the day. The candles are placed in a Kinara, which is symbolic of the continental Africans, our parent people. The Kinara holds seven candles, the center one black, three red and three green. Gifts are given during Kwanzaa where Kuumba (Creativity) is greatly encouraged. According to Dr. Karenga, "To buy everything ready made is to burden Kwanzaa with the kind of commercialism that presently plagues Christmas. The giving of gifts during Kwanzaa does not contradict this, as gifts should be affordable and of an educational or artistic nature."

In celebrating the seven principles of Kwanzaa we learn that it is important to acknowledge and be proud of our great history each day of our lives. It is very disgusting that the federal government has set aside one month (a 28 day month at that) for us to celebrate our proud history. It's almost like saying "Go ahead and get it over quickly, and we don't want to hear about it again for another year." We are able to find an inner peace and self-love through celebrating our African heritage which can be used as a bridge for us to find that same peace and love in regards to our complete

lives. "Celebrating our African American Heritage Every Day of our Lives." We in AALGA affirm this. We hope that you will join us in this most meaningful affirmation....

Dinner

(continued from page 1)

work against racism, sexism, and homophobia in all communities; to create a positive attitude between and among black non-gays and gays; to improve the relationships between black lesbians and gay men; to maintain and stress the beauty of black culture and lesbian/gay culture; and to build a strong political and economic base for black lesbians and gay men.

This year's five nominees included both AALGA members and non-members; all of them very active in the both the black and gay and lesbian communities. This year's award was given to Carolyn Mobley

Carolyn Mobley

Carolyn Mobley was active in the organizing effort which resulted in the formation of AALGA and served as the first female Co-chair along with Marquis Walker.

She began her involvement with Atlanta's gay and lesbian community in 1976 by joining the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC). Since 1981 she has been an active member of the staff of the church serving as student clergy, deacon, and choir director. Her service through the church led her to work with the homeless, PWA's, and both women and men in relationship crises.

Mobley served on the Board of Directors of the Atlanta Gay Center from 1984-1986 and spoke on behalf of the Center at a city wide hearing when the Atlanta City Council considered repealing a "Gay Rights Ordinance" in 1986. She has also been a volunteer with AID Atlanta and continues to help with AIDS education as a speaker. She has been a member of the Atlanta Feminist Women's Chorus since its beginning and has been a featured singer at many of the city's gay and lesbian rallies, protests and pride week celebrations. Most recently, she opened for the openly gay singing duo Romanovsky and Phillips, where she was introduced as having been on the board of, or at least having helped out almost every member organization of MACGLO (Metropolitan Atlanta Coalition of Gay and Lesbian Organizations). ...

CROSSROADS

THE NEWS OF THE AFRICAN AMERICAN LESBIAN/GAY ALLIANCE

VOLUME 3, NO. 1

January 1989

Thursday-Sunday, January 12-29.....**THE AIDS TRILOGY** will be presented at Nexus Contemporary Arts Center. Call 584-2104 for more information.

Friday, January 13 **Women of Color Caucus** potluck at 6:30pm at Sandy and Sabrina's, for mre info call 378-6979.

Saturday, January 14..... An inclusiveness workshop sponsored by All Saints MCC 575 Boulevard SE, 11am to 4:30pm. Call Darryl at 636-3527 for info.

Sunday, January 15..... "Working to Keep the Dream Alive" **BWMT/Atlanta** Cordially invites the members of AALGA to join them at an informal reception. The reception will be held at 1688 Porter Dr. NW, 6pm to 8pm. For directions or more information call 794-0264.

Monday, January 16 MACGLO has received a permit to march in the **Martin Luther King Day Parade**. Start lining up at Noon at Houston and Peachtree Streets. Look for the MACGLO banner. Bring additional signs, banners and placards.

Saturday, January 21..... **Men's Caucus** meeting, 5:30-8pm "Nurturing and Positive Mental Attitude" will be the topic. Call Ron at 297-8815 for directions.

Tuesda, January 24..... **BEGIN TO MEDITATE!** An introduction to various mediation techniques. Cynthia Cole, meditation facilitator, has practiced meditation for 5years. Tuesdays through March 14, 7-8:30pm, Intown YWCA, 957 N Highland Ave. Call 892-3476.

Friday, January 27..... Women's Dance at the Trolley Barn, 968 Edgewood, 8-12pm, hosted by Sister Sister Productions to benefit the National Lesbian Agenda Conference. Tickets are \$10 & on sale at Charis (work exchange available). Call Cathy. 377-8312 for more information.

Saturday & Sunday, January 28-29.....Southeastern Planning Meeting for the National Lesbian Agenda Conference, Emory University. Call 377-8312 for more information.

Thursday-Sunday, February 2-5, **BECOMING VISIBLE**, a new play by **Sabrina Sojourner** celebrating black lesbian/gay history and experience. Performances are 8pm Thursday - Saturday and 5pm Sunday at Nexus Theater, 608 Ralph McGill Blvd. Call 584-2104 for reservations.

Friday-Sunday, February 17-19, "LOVING OURSELVES, HEALING OURSELVES, PREPARING FOR THE 21ST CENTURY" is the theme for the 2nd Annual Black Lesbian Gay Leadership forum in Los Angeles. Call Ron at 297-8815 or Sabrina at 378-6979 for information on how you can be involved. Or contact Phil Wilson, the conference planner, at 213 667-2549.

Friday, March 10..... The **Women of Color Caucus**, announces a celebration for Women's History Month in March. "GIFTS FROM THE HEART" will be the theme for an evening of music, poetry, and prose. "GIFTS" will take place at the First Existentialist Church on Candler Park Rd. Women wishing to participant should leave a message for Sandy at 378-6979.

CROSSROADS

THE NEWS OF THE AFRICAN AMERICAN LESBIAN/GAY ALLIANCE

VOLUME 3, NO. 5

May 1989

Eavesdropping on the Board

by Robin

I was curious to see how AALGA's new Board of Directors functioned. After all, this was a new Board, half the members of this Board of Directors had not been on the previous Board. I wanted to see how these diverse personalities would fit together and what sort of picture of AALGA's future they would form. To my delight I discovered that the picture is a bright one. There was lots of energy and a determination to get things done on the part of the Board members.

The ideas were plentiful during the two and a half hour Board meeting. Each Coordinator came armed with plans, projects, numbers, projections and even some visual aids. The Membership Committee is getting geared up for a full scale membership drive in June. They want to let old members know that we are part of a family, and they want to gain new members to extend our family. The Fundraising Coordinators already have four fun projects planned, the first of which is taking place on June 3. These two folks have a lot of great ideas to make AALGA a financially solvent organization. The Service and Education Coordinator is hard at work planning programs for our monthly meetings as well as other activities.

The most glaring aspect of all these plans is that they're too much for the eight members of the Board of Directors to do on their own. There is too much work and too much fun for eight people to possibly survive it all. The Board's plans are ambitious and their energy is infectious. If you've been sitting on the side-lines waiting for something to do, or if you've wondered what AALGA is all about, now is the time to take action. Get involved - contact a Board member and find out what you can do on their committee. Now is the time to get on board because with these people running the show AALGA is definitely going places.

AALGA to Join NCBLG

AALGA's Board of Directors will submit an application to the National Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays (NCBLG) to join as an affiliate organization. NCBLG is a 10 year old organization that has 5 chapters across the nation and organizing efforts in as many as nine other cities.

As an affiliate organization AALGA will gain NCBLG's non-profit organization status. This status will benefit AALGA members by making their financial contributions to AALGA, including their membership dues, tax deductible.

Beyond the financial benefits, membership in NCBLG will connect AALGA with other chapters and affiliate organizations and increase our national profile.

To join NCBLG AALGA will have to pay an annual fee of \$200. AALGA will join NCBLG for a one year trial and at the end of that year the membership will evaluate the costs versus the benefits of belonging to NCBLG

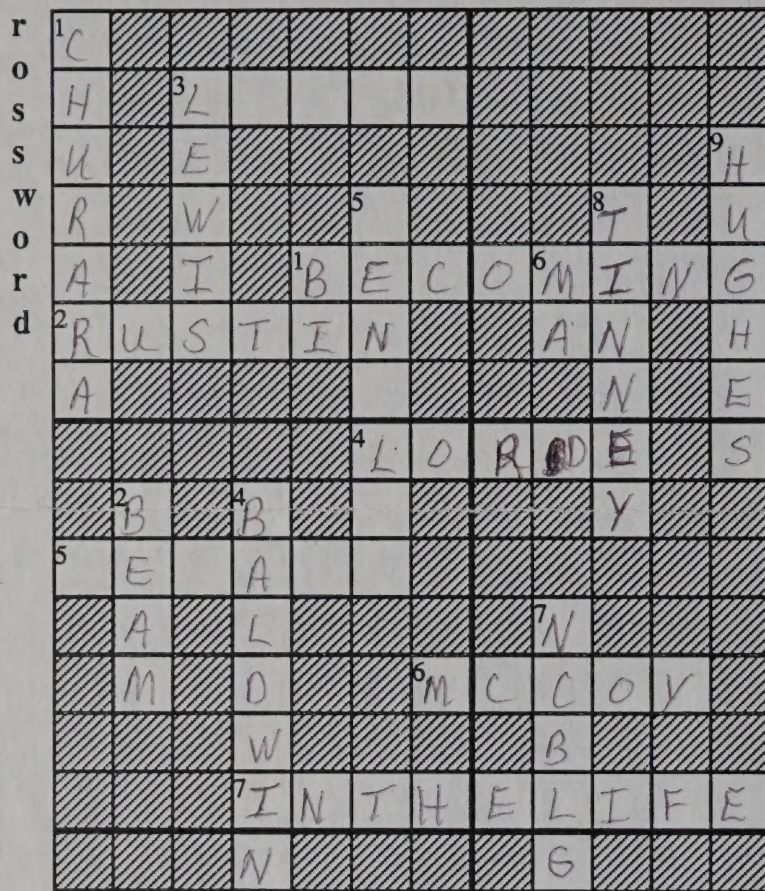
THE 1990 NATIONAL BLACK GAY AND LESBIAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE WILL BE HELD IN ATLANTA AND AALGA HAS BEEN DESIGNATED AS THE HOST ORGANIZATION. SEE THE APRIL ISSUE OF *Crossroads* FOR A DESCRIPTION OF THIS YEAR'S CONFERENCE IN LOS ANGELES.

AALGA Needs a New Home

For well over a year now AALGA has been holding its monthly meetings at the Quaker House, unfortunately those days are gone. When we showed up for the April general meeting we were informed that the Quaker House was being sold as of May 1. As a result, our May 7 general meeting will be at a member's home (see directions below). What is needed now are suggestions for a permanent meeting place. The space should be available on Sunday afternoons, be able to hold 30 to 40 people, and be near a MARTA bus line.

The May AALGA General Meeting will be at the home of
Duncan, Michael and John
at the corner of St. Augustine Pl. and N. Highland Ave.
Call if you need directions 874-1185

Crossroads



DOWN

1. The name of the AALGA symbol is ____-____.
2. Activist and editor of a 1986 Black Gay Anthology. Joseph Beam
3. Late 19th century sculptor. Edmonia Lewis
4. World acclaimed author of several novels including Giovanni's Room. James Baldwin
5. 1920's and 30's "Bulldagger" who gained world fame by singing the Blues. Gladys ____.
6. Gertrude Ma Rainey.
7. National Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays.
8. Pentecostal minister and founder of a black gay church in Washington DC. Dr. James Tinney
9. A major poet of the Harlem Renaissance. Langston Hughes.

ACROSS

1. Play about gay and lesbian People of Color by Sabrina Sojourner. Becoming Visible.
2. 1960's Civil Rights leader and an organizer of the '63 March on Washington. Bayard Rustin
3. Friend of Langston Hughes and intellectual contributor to the Harlem Renaissance. Alain ____.
4. Well known poet and essayist. Her volumes include "The Black Unicorn" and "From a Land Where Other People Live". Audre Lorde
5. Science fiction writer who has won most major science fiction awards and author of the Neveryóna series. Samuel R. ____.
6. Activist and Chair of the NCBLG. Renee McCoy
7. 1986 Black Gay Anthology published by Alyson Publications In The Life. (3 words)

AALGA will host
An Artist's Bazaar
Saturday, June 3 Noon -8 pm

Local visual artists and crafts people
will be on hand to sell their wares
and performing artists will be there
to entertain you.

Food, Fun, and a Great Day
in the Sun.

2237 Shamrock Drive, Decatur
289-0298

Admission \$5

It's Picnic Time!

AALGA will have its annual family picnic in
the park on Sunday, May 21 at Lake Claire
Park (at the end of Alameta St.) from 2 pm
until. Bring your food and your blanket and
join us at the park. Everyone welcome.

.....
Crossroads will need new editors starting
with the July 1989 issue. The term of the
current editors of *Crossroads* will end soon
and we need someone to replace them.
Crossroads needs input from all segments of
our community and both a male and a
female editor will be needed. If you are
interested in being an editor or part of the
Crossroads team please drop a note to the P.O.
Box (AALGA, PO Box 50374, Atlanta, GA
30302) or talk to one of the Co-Chairs.
.....

An Update on the Military Freedom Project

THIS ARTICLE IS AN UPDATE OF AN ARTICLE
APPEARING IN THE FEBRUARY 1989 *Crossroads*.

In November of 1988, four organizations launched a new political organizing project to rescind Department of Defense policies which discriminate against lesbians and gay men in all branches of the armed services. The Gay & Lesbian Military Freedom Project is a joint effort on the part of the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF), the Women's Equity Action League (WEAL), the National Organization for Women (NOW) and the Lesbian/Gay Rights Project of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). In the area of congressional action the Military Freedom Project lobbyist have visited the offices of six congresspersons to urge Congressional oversight in the investigation of sexual harassment of gay and non-gay women in the military. The Military Freedom Project has recruited witnesses to testify during the public comment session of the Spring meeting of the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Service (DARCOWITS). Testimony will

be presented at the DARCOWITS meeting by several women veterans concerning witch-hunts against women service members based on allegations of lesbianism.

The Military Freedom Project has reached out to three women who were incarcerated at Parris Island for alleged lesbianism. Staff and volunteers are currently making contact with active duty personnel under investigation for lesbianism. Gay men and lesbians facing investigations are urged to contact NGLTF and the Project.

Two grassroots efforts underway involve the collection of first-person accounts by lesbians and gay men who are Armed Forces veterans or who are currently serving in the service, and organizing for a national Veteran's Day action to be held in Washington DC in November 1989.

Persons who have experienced discriminations or otherwise been harmed by the Defense Department's discriminatory policies should submit their stories to the Military Freedom Project c/o NGLTF, 1517 U St. NW, Washington DC 20009. Request for confidentiality will be respected.

Calendar

- Saturday, April 29.....**Black Book Fair** sponsored by Akbar's Books-n-Things of St. Louis, Mo.
10 am to 10 pm at the Georgia World Congress Center. Room 314. Books from black publishers across the country. Children's Extravaganza 1-4pm. Call 221-3275 for info.
- Sunday, April 30.....**Sweet Honey in the Rock**, 8pm Atlanta Symphony Hall. Sign language interpreted and wheel chair accessible.
- Thursday, May 4.....**Shay Youngblood** reading from her first book The Big Mama Stories at Charis Books & More. 7:30 pm.
- Sunday, May 7.....**AALGA General Meeting**, New meeting place. 4 pm. Open to Everyone. Call 378-6979 or 874-1185.
- Tuesday, May 9.....**Alice Walker** will sign her new novel Temple of My Familiar at Charis 6-7pm.
- Thursday, May 11.....**Cheryl Tarkington** of featured soloist of the Atlanta Feminist Women's Chorus at Charis. 7:30.
- Thursday, May 18.....**Aisha Nanji** will talk about her new book Black Celebrations: The First Book of Afro-American Holidays at Charis 7:30 pm.
- Sunday, May 21.....**AALGA's Family Picnic**. Lake Claire Park 2pm until. Bring your basket and blanket and come ready to have a good time.
- Saturday, June 3.....**AALGA's Artist Bazaar** 2237 Shamrock Drive, Decatur. Call 289-0298 for info and directions. Admission \$5.

Tell us what you think about AALGA:

Membership renewal is upon us once again. AALGA's membership year runs from July 1 to June 30. Membership in AALGA costs only \$25 per year, and when AALGA gets non-profit status (see "AALGA to Join NCBLG" on page 1) the dues will be tax deductible. The benefits of membership include:

- Discounts to special AALGA events (Discounts to be announced as each event occurs)
- Voting rights on issues presented at AALGA general meetings.
- Optional membership in AALGA's Phone Tree
- A one year subscription to *Crossroads*
- An AALGA membership card
- The knowledge that you are helping to support an organization that is committed to standing up for you and to keeping you informed.

If necessary dues may be paid in installments. All payment arrangements should be made with the Treasurer. The deadline for complete dues payment is the July 2 AALGA general meeting. Anyone who has not paid their dues by this time will be dropped from the AALGA membership list and from the *Crossroads* mailing list.

The production of *Crossroads* is a major expenditure and although we would like to continue to provide it to everyone who wants it, the financial health of the organization precludes us from doing so. If you wish to receive *Crossroads* but do not wish to be a member of AALGA you may subscribe for a yearly fee of \$13.

Maynard Jackson Welcomes Gays and Lesbians at Birthday Party

Maynard Jackson, a candidate for mayor of Atlanta in the October 3 general election, welcomed supporters attending his fifty-first birthday celebration at the Georgia World Congress Center and acknowledged the support of many constituents, including Gays and Lesbians.

Before a crowd of nearly 4,000 supporters attending the fund-raiser, the former mayor recognized a wide diversity of support for his campaign. During his brief remarks, Jackson promised to be a mayor for "...all Atlantans, rich and poor, young and old, white and black, gay, lesbian, and straight..."

Jackson's public acknowledgement of gay and lesbian support has been expressed at previous gatherings, including a recent reception for gay and lesbian voters where he reaffirmed his commitment to equal rights for all citizens. "Gays and lesbians are a vital and integral part of Atlanta," Jackson said, "and merit the same protection and representation as anyone else."

During his first term in office, Jackson was the first mayor to proclaim a Gay and Lesbian Pride Day in Atlanta.

[Jackson staffers have asked to have an opportunity for him to meet with the AALGA membership. Notification of when this meeting will take place will be in future issues of the *Crossroads* Calendar]

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